Tuesday 15 April 2025

Amateur Photographer

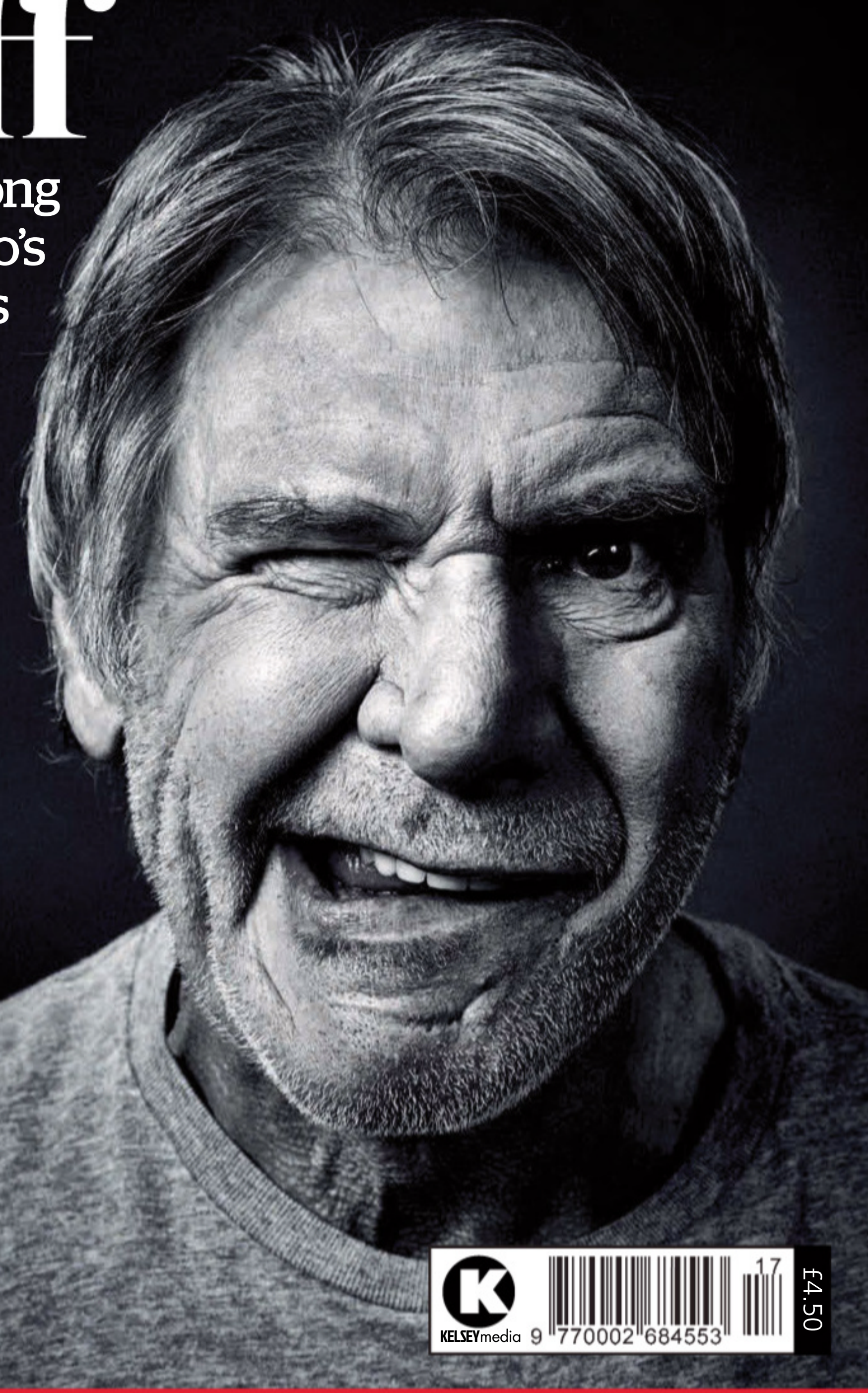
American cameras

John Wade looks back at the quirky history of the USA's camera industry

Passionate about photography since 1884

Face off

Andy Gotts reflects on a long career photographing a who's who of music and film stars



Street life

Jan Enkelmann's engaging portrait of his community

Edward Curtis

His 19th-century document of American Indians revisited

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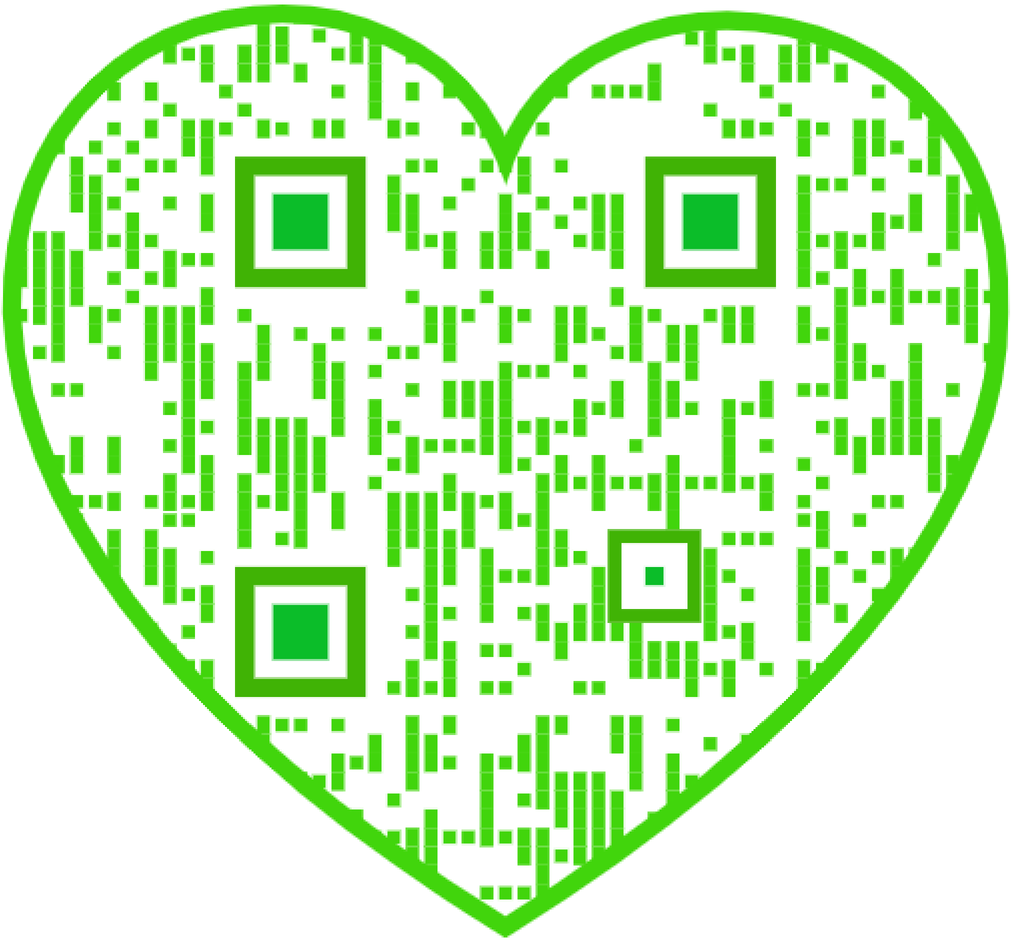

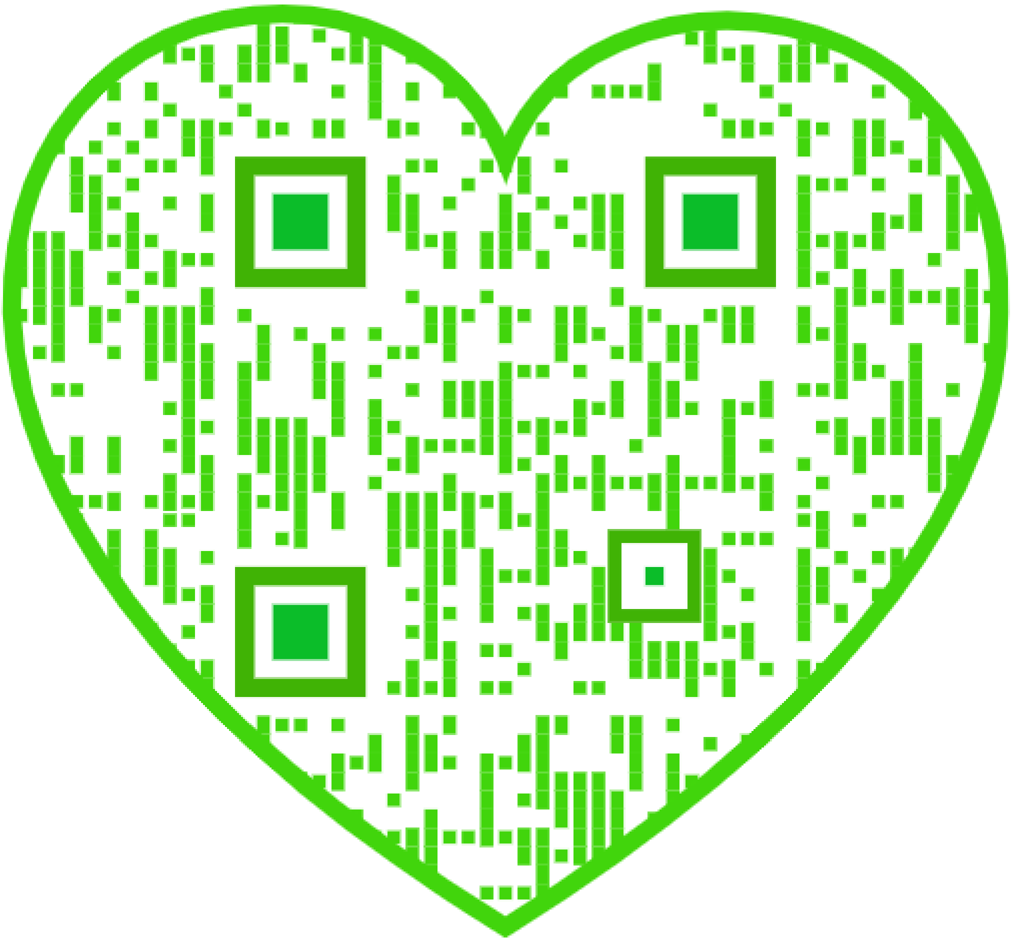

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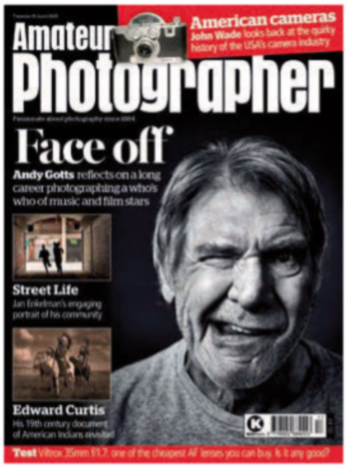
© JOHN WADE

Welcome

This week's issue is a smorgasbord of top-quality content, with something for everyone. Portrait photography fans will lap up my fascinating interview with celebrity portrait specialist, Andy Gotts. His portfolio is like a who's who of famous movie and music stars and even if you're more likely to shoot Alison's wedding than Al Pacino, there will be lots of interest and relevance. Then, Jan Enkelmann talks about his gritty but engaging Brixton street photography project. Hardware-wise, we review Viltrox's keenly priced fast 35mm prime lens, while John Wade explores the sometimes wacky world of American cameras (it's not just Kodak). Enjoy the issue, y'all!

Geoff Harris, Deputy Editor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COVER PICTURE © ANDY GOTTS.
NSET, ABOVE: © JAN ENKELMANN. INSET, BELOW: EDWARD S CURTIS

This week's striking cover shot of Harrison Ford was taken by Andy Gotts. See more of Andy's great celebrity portraits in our article on page 12

THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

GEOFF HARRIS
Deputy Editor

Geoff speaks to top celebrity photographer Andy Gotts about his amazing career

PETER DENCH

The AP regular talks to Jan Enkelmann about his new book that sets out to capture the spirit of Brixton

JOHN WADE

AP's vintage camera authority John Wade guides you on the world of American cameras over the years

ANDY WESTLAKE
Technical Editor

AP's resident kit expert tests a very affordable APS-C format lens, the Viltrox 35mm f/1.7

AMY DAVIES
Features Editor

On page 8, Amy looks at Edward Curtis's historic document of American Indians

JESSICA MILLER
Dep Online Editor

Jessica shares your great shots on page 44 and your social media answers (page 42)

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Instax Mini 41 revealed

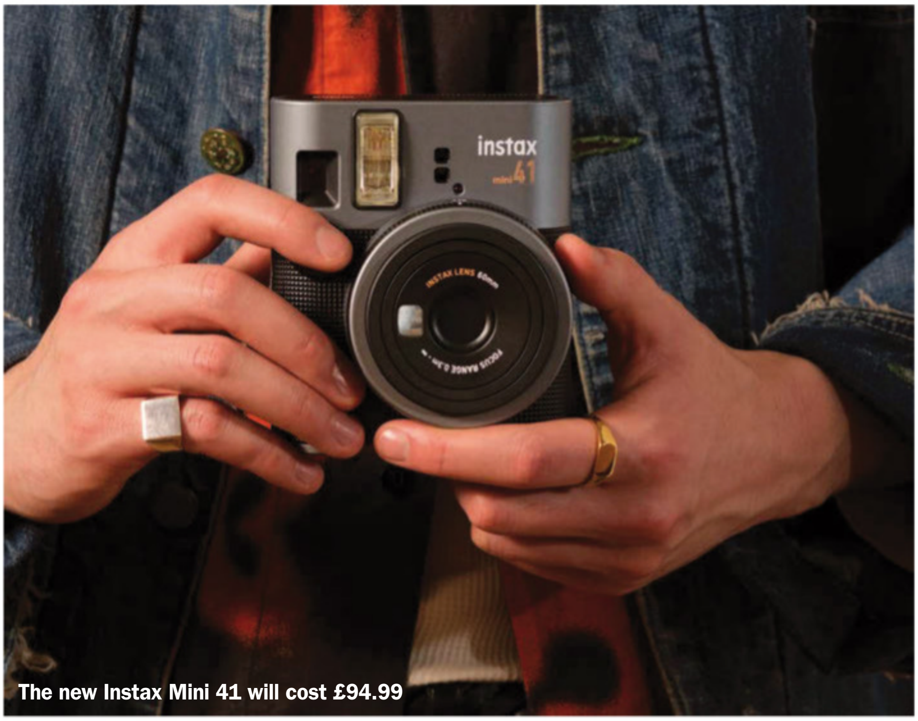
THE INSTAX range of instant cameras has been hugely successful for Fujifilm, and the company has announced the latest model, the Instax Mini 41.

It's an update to the Mini 40, which we named as one of the best small Instax cameras, and comes with improved close-up performance and parallax correction, which helps to centre close-up images (including selfies) by adjusting the position of the 'focus' mark to the lower left of the frame.

Other features include auto exposure and built-in flash, a 60mm f/12.7 lens, 30cm close-up focus distance and 1/2 to 1/250sec shutter speed. As you'd expect, natty looks are also a big selling point, with the subtle metallic-like finish and orange colour accents 'adding unique design elements to the camera body,' said Fujifilm.

The new Instax Mini 41 delivers 62x46mm prints via Instax Mini film, weighs 345g without AA batteries, and measures 104.5x122.5x 67.5mm.

The camera will be available from 17 April, priced at £94.99, while a grey case is also available as an accessory for £20.99.



The new Instax Mini 41 will cost £94.99

New Nikon firmware

NIKON has released a major firmware update for its Zf full-frame mirrorless camera. Firmware v2.00 includes dedicated subject-detection for birds, providing more powerful detection and tracking performance, along with the introduction of a Hi Res zoom function when shooting video.

There are also usability improvements for shooting with manual focus lenses. You can easily exit the magnified display by half-pressing the shutter release button, for example, while a new function enables users to record the aperture values used during shooting for better control and reference.

Firmware version 2.00 also brings support for Nikon Imaging Cloud to enable the automatic transfer of images to third-party cloud storage services, automatic firmware updates, and access to a wide range of creative Imaging Recipes.

See bit.ly/newzffirmware for more information and to download the firmware.

WHAT'S NEW
Zf
Firmware v2.00
Keep inspiring
Nikon

Firmware version 2.00 adds dedicated bird detection among other improvements

© MIKHAIL TERESHCHENKO – TASS AGENCY/WORLD PRESS PHOTO 2025

Eyes on the world

MIKHAIL Tereshchenko is among the winners of this year's World Press Photo Awards for his powerful images of street protests in Georgia. The 42 winners were selected from 59,320 entries by 3,778 photographers from 141 countries. Palestinian photographer Samar Abu Elouf, recently recognised for her outstanding photojournalism in AP's annual awards, was also among the winners. The overall victor in this year's World Press Photo Awards will be revealed at an eponymous exhibition in Amsterdam on 17 April.

See worldpressphoto.org/contest/2025

Protests in Georgia by Mikhail Tereshchenko, who won the Stories category in World Press Photo Awards 2025

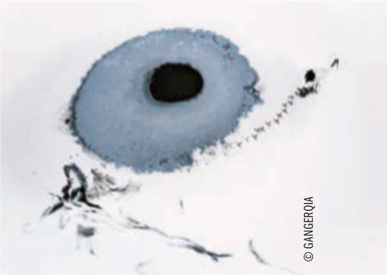
New Viltrox fab fifty

VILTROX has announced another fast, affordable lens in its entry-level Air line-up, the AF 50mm F2.0 Air FE/Z. This is an autofocus lens for Sony E and Nikon Z mounts, featuring three ED lenses, four high-refractive elements and one aspherical element with HD nano-coating for 'vivid, distortion-free images.' It also has nine diaphragm blades for attractive bokeh, while weighing just 205g. The lens is available for £199 from the Viltrox Amazon store (bit.ly/viltroxamazon).

VILTROX
AF 50/2.0 FE

Aerial photo winner

MYSTERIOUS Realm, taken by Chinese photographer Gangerqia, has won the prize for best photo in a competition organised by aerial photography and videography community, SkyPixel. 'This aerial photo works beautifully because it almost tricks you at first glance – like you're looking at a drawing rather than a :zreal landscape,' noted one of the judges, travel photographer Luke Stackpoole. 'There's a frozen pond shaped like an eye that immediately grabs your attention.' See all the winners at skypixel.com/contests/2024



© GANGERQIA

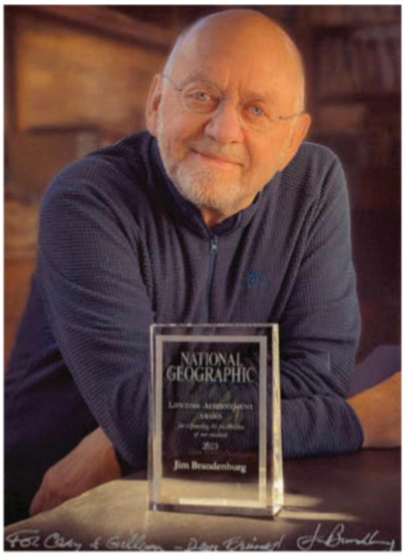
Annual Best Photo 'Mysterious Realm', by Gangerqia

Remembering Jim Brandenburg

JIM Brandenburg, one of the most famous wildlife photographers in the world, has died aged 79 after a short illness. Jim is best known for his hugely influential books, *Chased by the Light: A 90 Day Journey* (1998) and *Brother Wolf: A Forgotten Promise* (1993), the latter also featuring one of his most iconic wolf images.

Born in Minnesota in 1945, Jim started out as a press photographer before forging a 40-year relationship with *National Geographic* magazine. This culminated in 2023, when he received the National Geographic Lifetime Achievement Award – a huge honour for Jim, as he was nominated by 200 of the magazine's top photographers. 'I have been so very fortunate over the years to have received some precious and treasured awards around the world, but this one is unique for me because it is from my peers – some of the finest photographic talent in the world.'

Honours also came from several camera makers; he was made a Nikon Legend Behind the Lens in 2001, a Canon Explorer of Light 2005-2008, and received AP's Power of Photography Award in 2013. Jim was a close friend of Gray Levett, owner of Nikon specialist Grays of Westminster, and spoke at various events organised by the retailer over the years. Jim was also a columnist for AP and you can read some of the fascinating articles he wrote for us at bit.ly/apbrandenburg.



© GRAYS OF WESTMINSTER

Jim with his National Geographic Lifetime Achievement Award

Despite shooting all over the world, Jim remained a proud son of Minnesota, receiving an honorary doctorate from the university and setting up a foundation to protect the state's prairies.

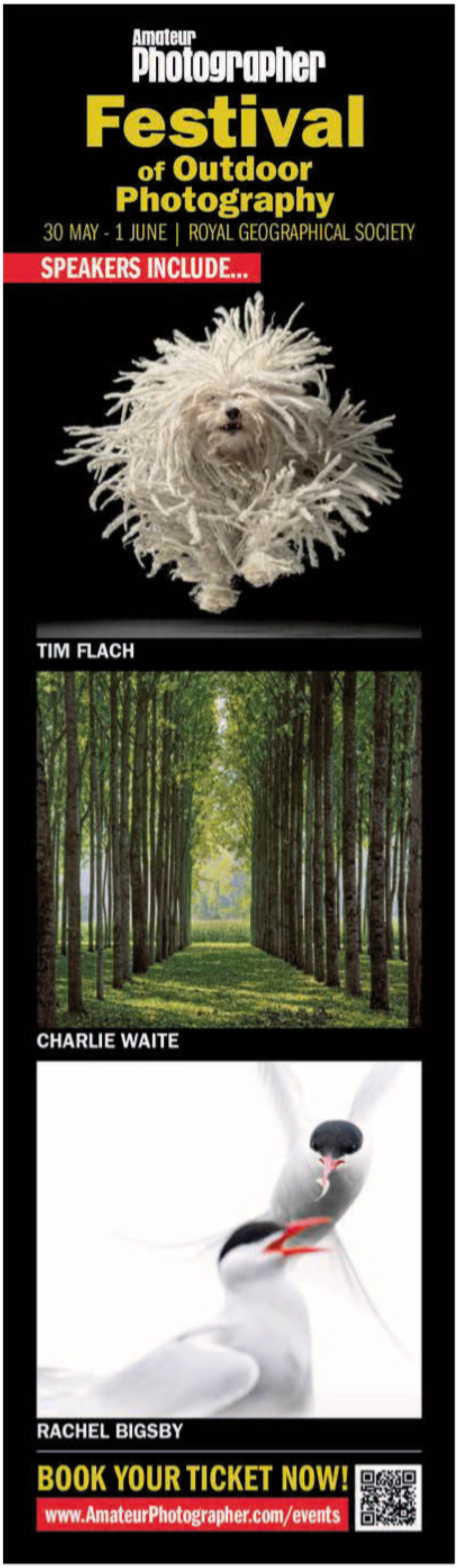
Our deepest condolences go out to Jim's family and many friends.

New 3 Legged Thing light stand

THREE Legged Thing, the British tripod maker with a penchant for oddball product names, has announced the Luna light stand.

Made from carbon fibre with aerospace-grade magnesium alloy support, Luna folds down to just 56cm, making it easy to carry around, but extends to 2m (79in), giving you plenty of height for lighting set-ups. Other features include a spring-loaded thread adapter that transforms the top mount to fit lights, microphones and smartphones, along with a central column that detaches to serve as a boom arm. 'It's ideal for audio set-ups, boom microphone, camera boom and awkward lighting angles,' says the company. Meanwhile rubber feet pull off to reveal metal spikes, designed to keep everything steady on unstable services.

Luna is available now for £129.99 from 3leggedthing.com and camera retailers.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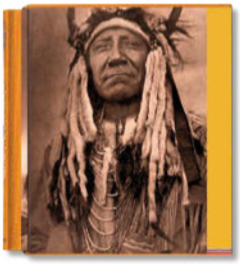
The North American Indian: The Complete Portfolios

by Edward S Curtis

£100, Taschen, hardcover in slipcase, 696 pages, ISBN: 9783836596732

An extensive look at the comprehensive work of photographer and ethnologist Edward S Curtis is a must for collectors, says **Amy Davies**



Travelling the length and breadth of North America for a 30-year-long project, the photographer – and ethnographer – Edward Sheriff Curtis, documented in both words and images the traditional lives of the rapidly diminishing indigenous inhabitants.

It became an obsession of his, eventually culminating in the publication of his encyclopaedic work *The North American Indian*, which is made up of 20 portfolios and 20 text volumes with over 2,000 illustrations.

During those three decades that he worked, he used the camera in an attempt to preserve the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples of North America. Every region of the continent was explored, over every type of terrain and through all weather conditions.

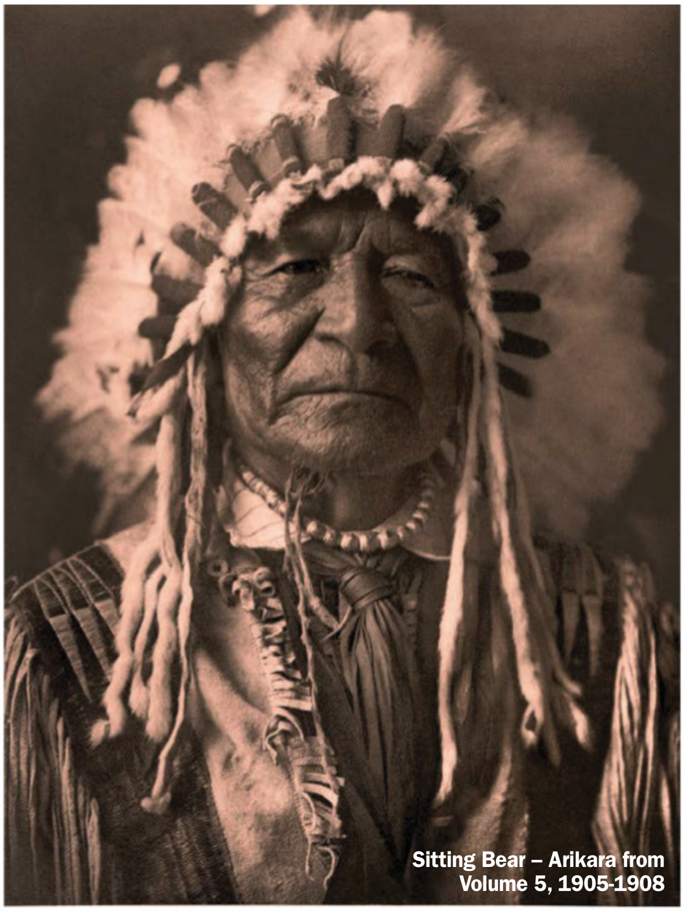
The weather ranged from the 50°c heat of the Mojave Desert, to the -20°C chill of the Arctic. He used foot, horse, wagon, donkey, boat and train – and later automobile – to travel to his destinations, taking more than 40,000 photographs during that time.

Without the work of Curtis, there's plenty that we wouldn't know about several of these peoples. That includes the rites of the Hopi in America's southwest, or the winter dancers of the Quagyuhl and the ceremonies which took place on Nunivak Island.

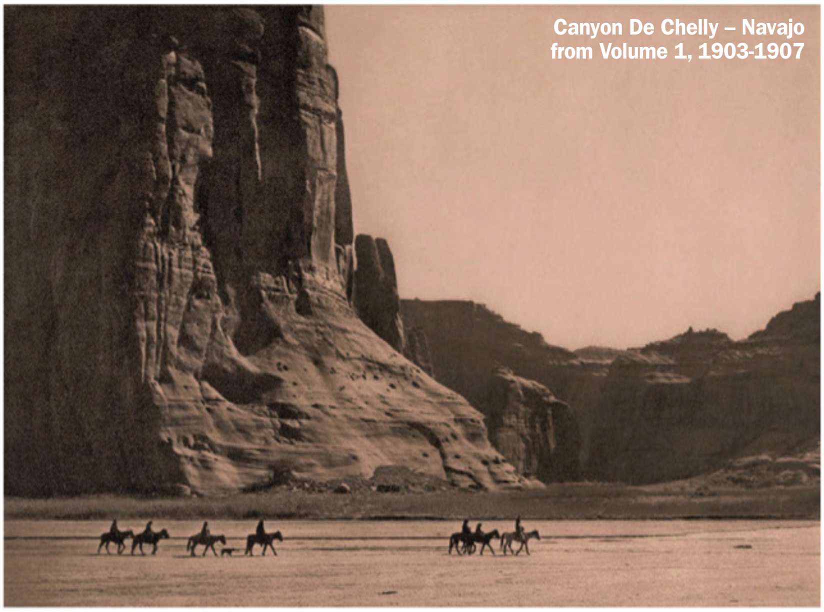
This is perhaps not a book that will have mass appeal, but the more you delve into it the more fascinating it becomes, even for us here on British shores who might well be less connected to the subject matter than those across the pond.

The work is printed on matte paper, which can sometimes mean the photographs don't appear to be super-sharp – but I'm not sure what else you'd expect from images which were taken such a long time ago, and in a range of difficult conditions.

For history and photography buffs, this publication is a very worthy addition to your collection, and something to be pored over with relish.



Sitting Bear – Arikara from Volume 5, 1905-1908



Canyon De Chelly – Navajo from Volume 1, 1903-1907

Sioux Chiefs from Volume 3, 1904-1908

Kótsuis and Hóhhuq – Nakoaktok from Volume 10, 1914

Family Group from Volume 20, 1928

ALL PICTURES TAKEN BY EDWARD S. CURTIS

Books & exhibitions

The latest and best books and exhibitions from the world of photography

Both photos courtesy of Kristen Joy Emack/L'Artiere

Cousins by Kristen Joy Emack

€45, L'Artiere, softcover, 96 pages, ISBN: 9788894515589

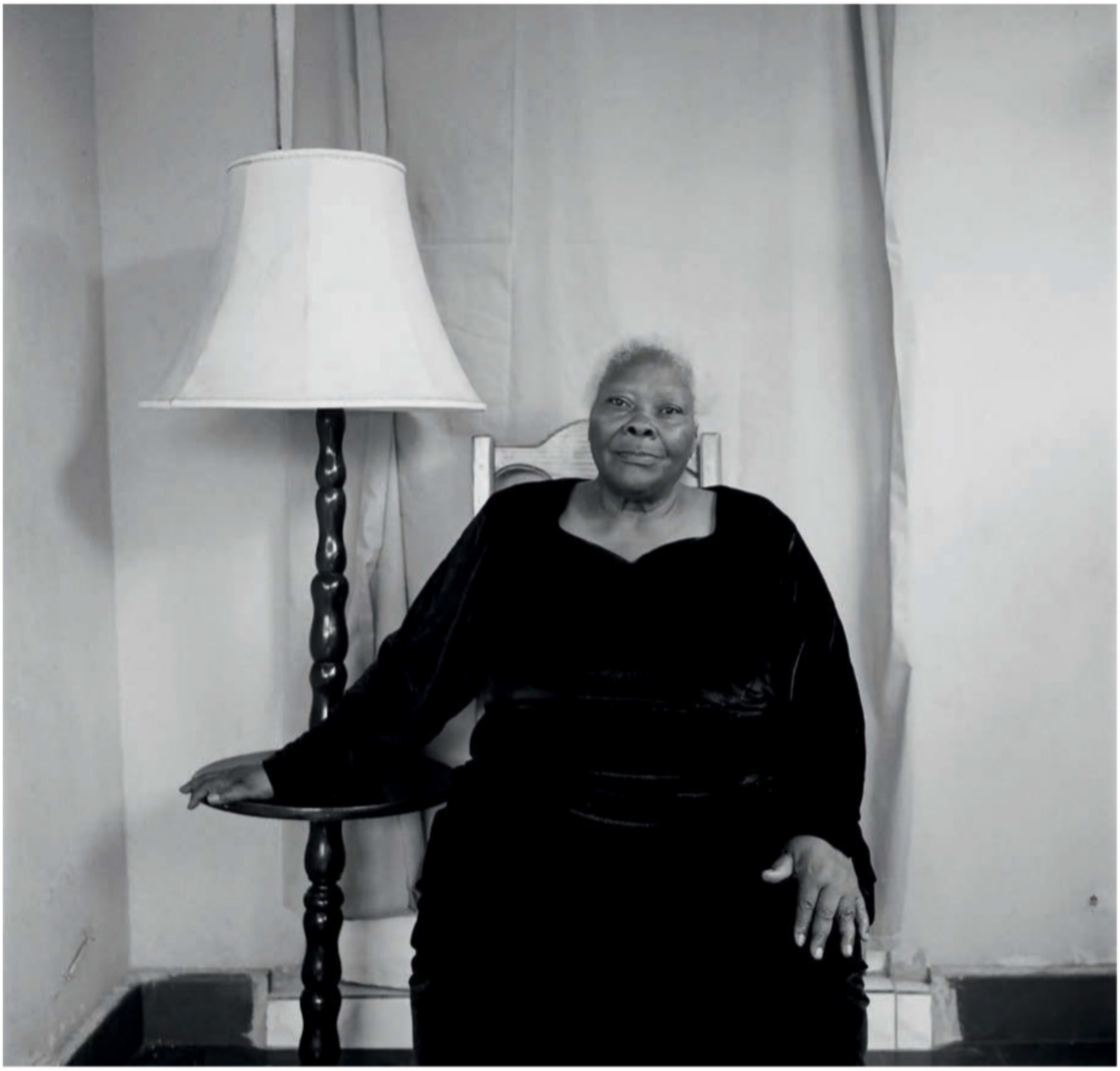
Exploring what it means to be a girl among other young girls, Kristen Joy Emack has been photographing her daughter and her nieces for a decade for this project.

Although photographing her family, these are far from traditional family album pictures. She hopes that these pictures will be seen as works of art – most especially by the subjects within them.

Mack thinks that it's important for these girls to be seen and loved fully, and to love and see themselves in the same way, too. In the images, the girls emerge as individuals through their relationships with one another.

This is a beautiful set of images that as a parent myself I'd have been delighted to capture. It has certainly given me pause to think about how I can move beyond the simple snapshot in documenting my family life, and perhaps it will do the same for you and yours too.

Emack hopes that her images move beyond snapshots



© MARCIA MICHAEL

Left: Portrait of the Matriarch, black and white silver gelatine print, 2009, Marcia Michael

Below: Studio Portrait of Young Girl, black and white silver gelatine print, 2009, Marcia Michael

Marcia Michael – The Family Album

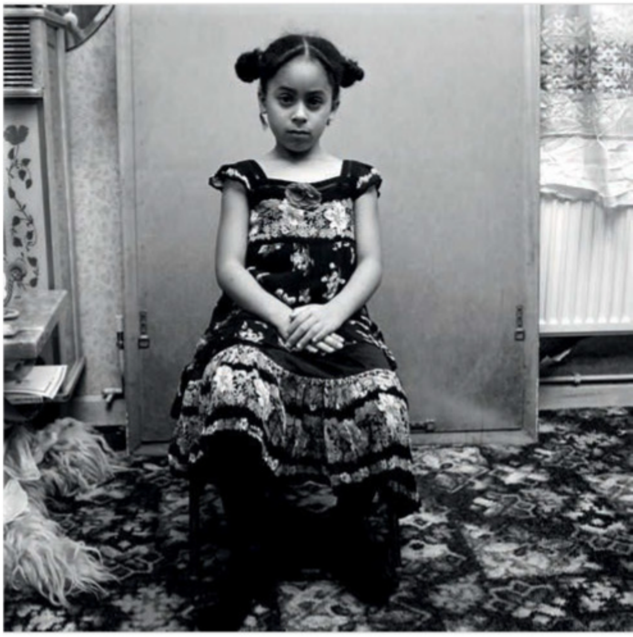
Until 1 June. Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
Free. See macbirmingham.co.uk for full opening times

The first major solo exhibition by the multidisciplinary artist Marcia Michael is described as a 'massive love letter' to family, celebrating a sense of belonging and joy found through family connections.

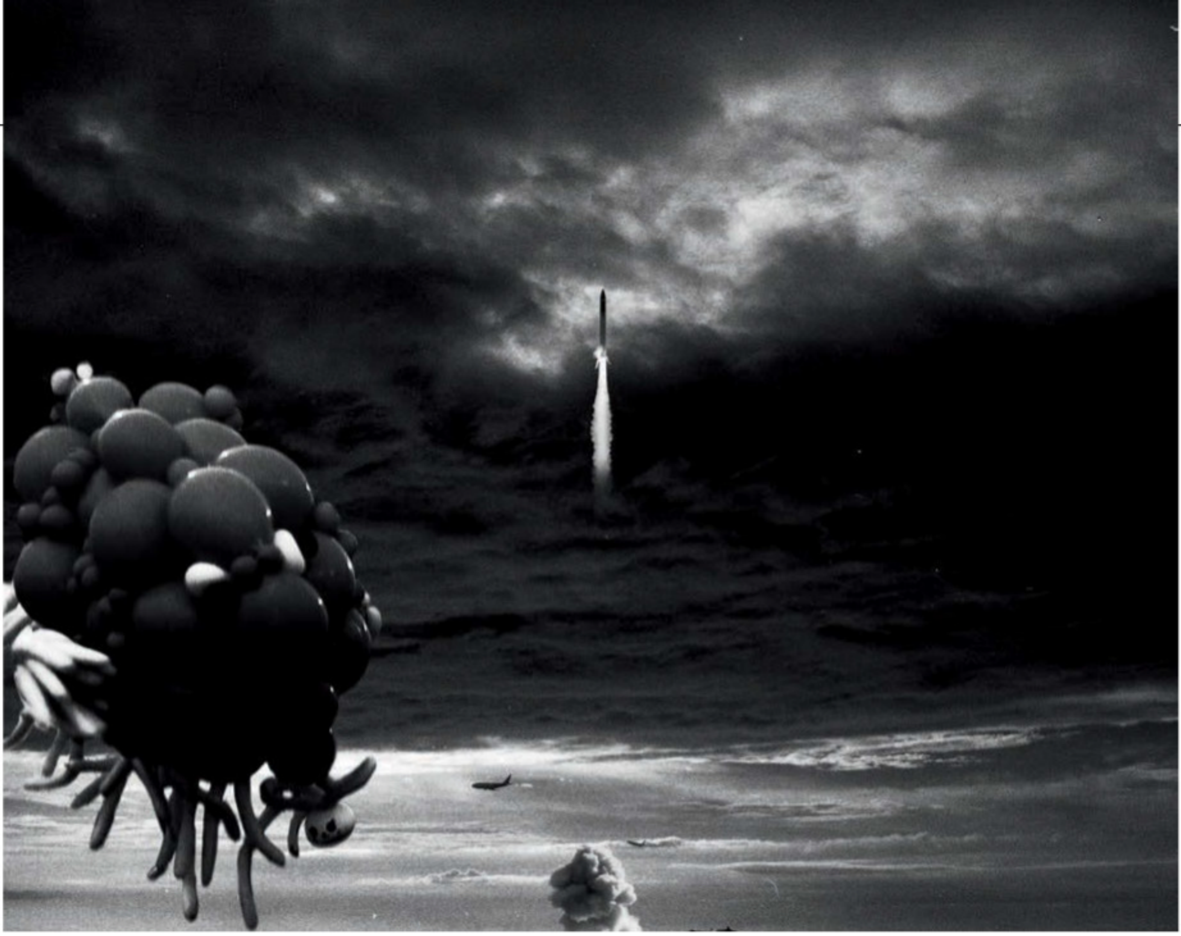
With photography, sculptures, ceramics and print design, Michael's work is formed of three interconnected series: The Study of Kin, The Family Album and The Object of My Gaze.

Of African and Caribbean descent, Michael's intimate portraits of herself and of her close family members – particularly those of her mother – work to serve as a reminder that the human body can act as a vessel, both physically and emotionally, for memories, love and identity.

As well as the exhibition itself, a catalogue of the show will also be on sale from the bookshop.



© MARCIA MICHAEL



Left: Have a Good Appearance Only

Below: Get Rid of Those Shiny Bugs

Spacing Memories
by Xu Xiaowei

£30, Unicorn Publishing, hardback, 128 pages

Featuring dream-space photo colleges created by the experimental modern art photographer Xu Xiaowei, this is a book which is a bit outside of the norm – and all the better for it.

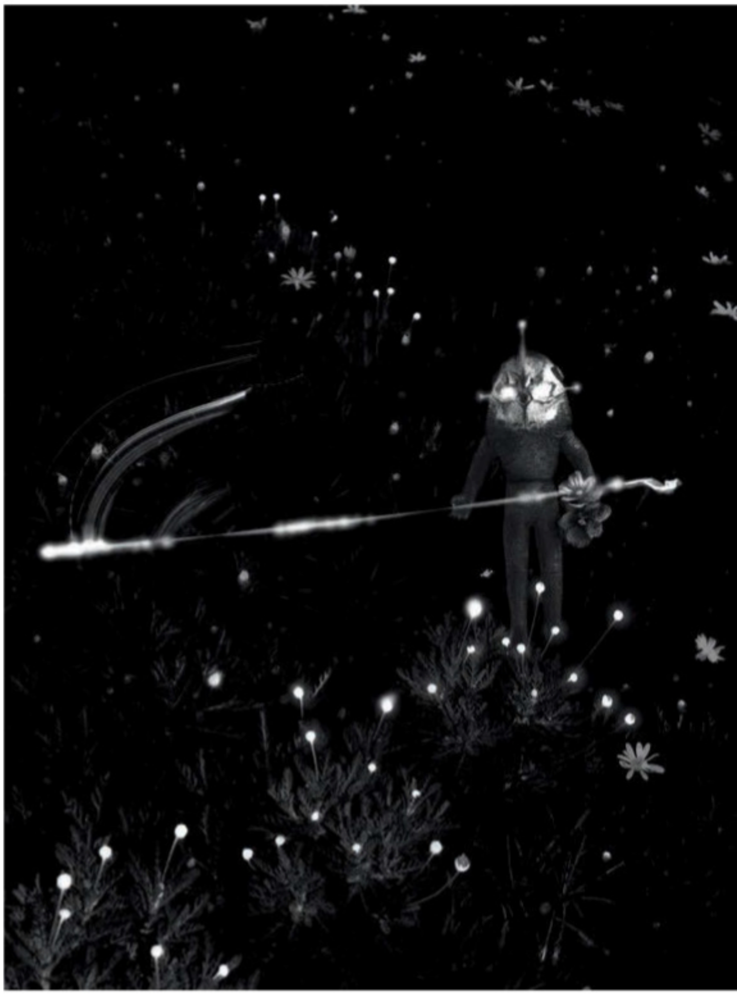
Xiaowei creates the work in a bid to 'reinvent' his memories, reflecting the personal turmoil often experienced in the face of rapid changes in Chinese society.

As you move through the book, we see non-linear and fragmentary stories to represent a dystopian fantasy world that is both unsettling but also strangely beautiful at the same time.

A highly successful photographer, Xiaowei has worked during the past ten years with well-known fashion brands, but at the same time has been pursuing his artistic passion having originally trained as an oil painter. It's an interesting look at how maintaining your own personal practice is an important facet of the work of professional photographers.

Inside the book, you'll also find text introductions from Dr Joshua Gong, a leading expert on contemporary Chinese art, and Roger Ballen, one of the most influential and important photographic artists of recent times. Through their words, you get a great insight into the context in which Xiaowei's pieces.

If you'd like a look at some unusual contemporary art photography, this book is certainly a great place to start.



One-shot Gotts

Celebrity photographer Andy Gotts looks back on a stellar career with **Geoff Harris** (and reveals why he wants a Ringo Starr quote to be his epitaph)

Left: Dolly Parton, 21st June 2014

Above: Scarlett Johansson, 13th October 2013

Recently celebrating 35 years in the business, Andy Gotts MBE is a unique and innovative celebrity portrait photographer who's always walked his own path. The title of his most recent portrait collection, *The Photograph*, is telling, as he favours a direct, stripped-back approach that prizes the authenticity of the captured moment over glamour and sycophancy – however distinguished his subject. He works alone and keeps things simple, capturing his subjects as they are.

The pantheon of famous actors and musicians in *The Photograph* like his approach too, from Paul Newman to Lily James, from Bryan Ferry to Motorhead. Andy dropped by our stand at The Photography Show for a chat, so we were keen to do a more in-depth interview.

While some of his celebrity sitters have reputations as divas, Andy is the exact opposite – he's generous with his time and bursting with hard-won insights. 'I got started as a celebrity portrait photographer entirely by chance,' he recalls. 'In 1990 I was doing a course in design and photography at Norfolk College of Art and Technology. By year two, I was close to giving up, as there was nothing I really wanted to get my teeth into in terms of photography. By a twist of fate, Stephen Fry came to the college one day to hand out diplomas. He was already a big star, and I knew the room next door to where he was speaking was going to be empty. So, I set up my camera and backdrop next door and asked him if I could take his portrait. He rolled his eyes but agreed, and much to my surprise, immediately followed me into the room. I took ten photos in 90 seconds, quickly developed the film and it changed my life forever. Stephen loved the images – one in particular, as a chance shadow had concealed a break in his nose – and displayed it at home. His friend, the actor Kenneth Branagh, saw the portrait, also loved it, and called up to see if I'd also like to photograph him and his wife Emma Thompson in north London. That's how it started.'

You'd think the young Andy would be starstruck, terrified, or both, but as he recalls, everything happened too quickly for him to overthink things. 'Whoever I went on to shoot, be it Rod Steiger, Paul Newman or Lauren Bacall, I was never starstruck, just excited. I'd have been more concerned if somebody who wasn't famous asked me to photograph them, as I wouldn't know where to start!'

Finding his style

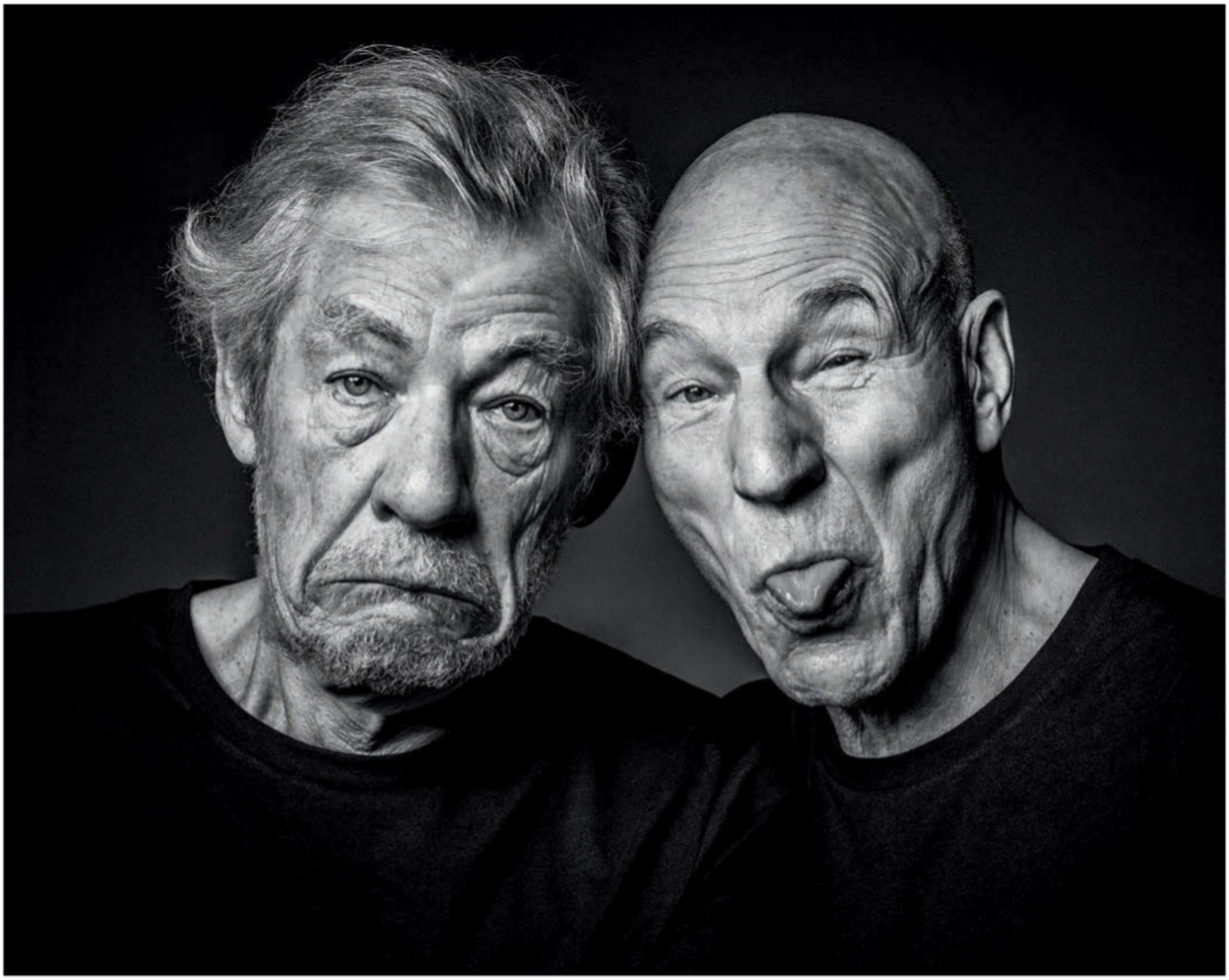
While Andy got off to a strong start, building a portfolio of actor portraits, he had to be resilient. 'When trying to earn a crust as a photographer around 1993, I'd turn up at the offices of famous magazines in London, hoping for commissions. I remember *Esquire* once looked at my portfolio and said "this work is just like David Bailey's." I was like, thanks very much! They were like "no, it's not a compliment. If we wanted David Bailey, we'd (expletive) hire David Bailey!" At the time it felt like a slap in the face but I saw their point. I had to develop my own style, not mimic other famous photographers.'

So rather than get discouraged, Andy drew on his deep love of movies, as well as great artists such as Caravaggio.

'I love the old portrait guys, Penn, Avedon, Karsch, but I mainly took my inspiration from film directors. I love classic movies by David Lean, Hitchcock, Fritz Lang. I studied how they lit the characters, and also drew inspiration from a wide range of other influences beyond stills photography. I specialise in gritty, realistic portraits with minimal editing, and my work has become instantly recognisable – which is not something you can say about a lot of other celebrity photographers.'

A unique way of working

As well as a different approach to portraiture, Andy came up with a new way of working with celebrities. 'My work model is unique. Imagine you are a famous actor. You come to me asking for portraits



Ian McKellen and Patrick Stewart, 14th August 2013

that are also unique – they are yours, not commissioned by some magazine. So, when the media next comes to you asking for an interview and photo shoot, you can turn around and say "how about we do the interview via Zoom – and by the way, I already have a selection of previously unseen shots of me, taken by Andy Gotts." In other words, the "talent" comes to me directly.'

This frees Andy to work as he wants, without some movie or music star's flunkies hassling him to hurry up during a promotional shoot. 'I never shoot people when they are working or promoting something. I don't do commissions for magazines either. Essentially, I shoot for me, not to keep other people happy. So if anything, I have too much time with my subjects, but it's not a problem as I get bored easily and work quickly. Even when I had to take pictures of celebrities during promotional "junkets" in the early days, I learned to work fast and this has stuck with me.'

One shot, one life

Andy's favourite example of this came when he was working with Paul Newman, which also explains how he got the nickname 'One Shot Gotts.' 'Paul flew me over to Connecticut to do some portraits over a couple of days. I knew exactly what I wanted and got everything set up. So Paul gets ready for a long session, and I am like, "thanks Mr Newman but we'll be done in ten minutes." He slammed his hands down on the table and yelled, "listen, I've been photographed by the best. I know it's at least two hours, so don't con me!" At the time I was shooting Polaroid film, and when I showed him the results after five minutes or so, he was like "son, that is impossible! You really are 'One Shot Gotts'." I've kept that nickname ever since!'

Andy's modus operandi also has a big influence on how he works with his sitters. 'Because I am a movie buff and my subjects know how my career has developed, I treat them as if I know them. I have no assistants, just me and the camera, and no hair or makeup people. So the celebrities are almost playing catch-up, not sure about what to expect. George Clooney, for example, has been photographed thousands of times, so my challenge is to try to do something he has never done before in a portrait session. I treat them like I know them, and avoid obvious, predictable questions. I ask them about their family, their hobbies and so on. My job is to capture a moment in time, not to interview them. 'I spend at least 30 minutes just chatting, which gives my subjects time to see what sort of guy I am and it gives me time to see what kind of mood they are in. There's no point asking somebody for a quirky shot if they are pissed-off or sombre. I then move the conversation in front of the camera, and start taking pictures – chat, click, chat, chat, click. I see my photo shoot as a conversation interrupted by taking photos. As I saw with Paul Newman, often my subject can't believe the shoot is done, as I am not directing them. It's like Cartier-Bresson and the decisive moment, I "craft" the decisive moment and suddenly capture it. Also, I might slip in a stupid comment, for example, and capture their reaction.'

Looking through *The Photograph*, you're struck by how many of the subjects are relaxed and having fun, but Andy is adamant that this is entirely spontaneous – he isn't directing people or asking them to goof around in a contrived way.

'Another great example is Harrison Ford. When I met Harrison, I asked why people were scared of him. He explained it was because he got so bored of journalists and photographers asking the same old questions about *Star Wars* when he'd done lots of other movies. "You haven't asked me about *Star Wars* once, you asked me about aircraft and World War II and it's been a pleasure spending time with you," he said. Harrison added that there were no pictures of him pulling silly faces, as no photographer had ever asked him before as they were all intimidated. So then he started pulling silly faces…'

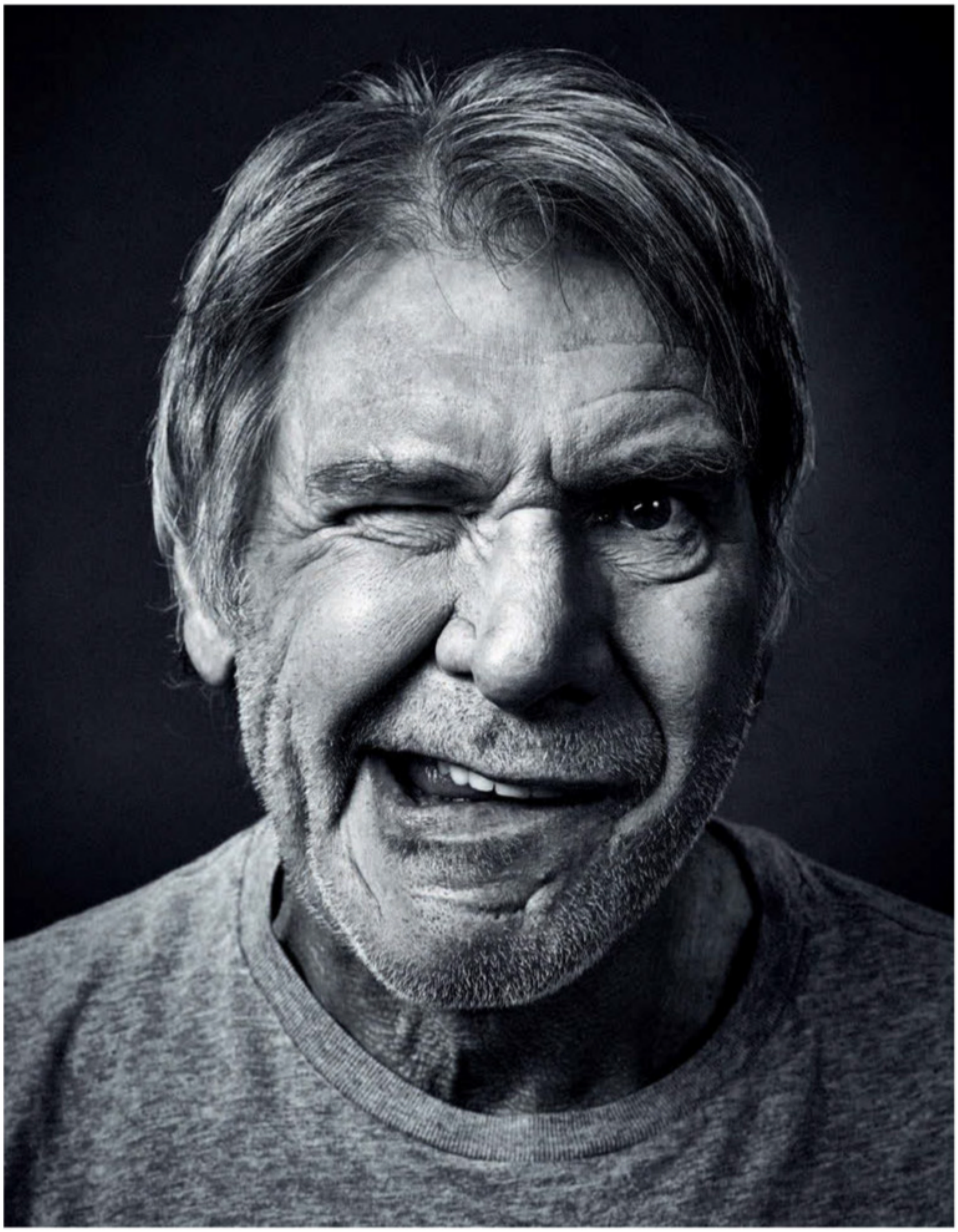
Keeping it real

While Andy is far from reaching the end of his career, he hopes to be remembered as a photographer who captured an authentic moment in the lives of his subjects, exactly as they are at that moment. By coincidence, Andy once ended up shooting Brad Pitt in the same studio as Annie Leibovitz and her large entourage, using the same lighting – but his approach was very different. 'Brad commented that while Annie's pictures for *Vanity Fair* magazine were flawless, he looked like he did ten years ago. In contrast, I'd captured all the lines in his face, and that he was perfectly happy with how he looked *now*.'

A similar, more touching anecdote concerns the Hollywood icon Lauren Bacall. 'Lauren was 88 at the time. I did a test shot with her looking blankly at the camera and then we did more shots where there was more "Lauren Bacall." She liked the test shots the most. 'Andy you can see every single line in my face – Humphrey Bogart gave me these crow's feet, Katharine Hepburn gave me those jowls.' I think this is why people love my work, I capture lived-in faces and the truth of the moment. The younger actor Andrew Scott was crying in our shoot, for example; I wonder where his brain was to be able to conjure up that moment of heartbreak.'

Andy wouldn't have survived so long as a celebrity portrait photographer without being tactful and sensitive to his subjects' wishes, while still doing his best to get beyond their carefully cultivated public persona in his shoots. As he wryly notes, 'If you piss off an actor, every other actor will know about it. They all talk to each other, as if there is some massive What'sApp group. I explain to my subjects that nobody else will see the pictures until they've told me the ones they don't like. I did some shots of

❯



Harrison Ford, 4th October 2014

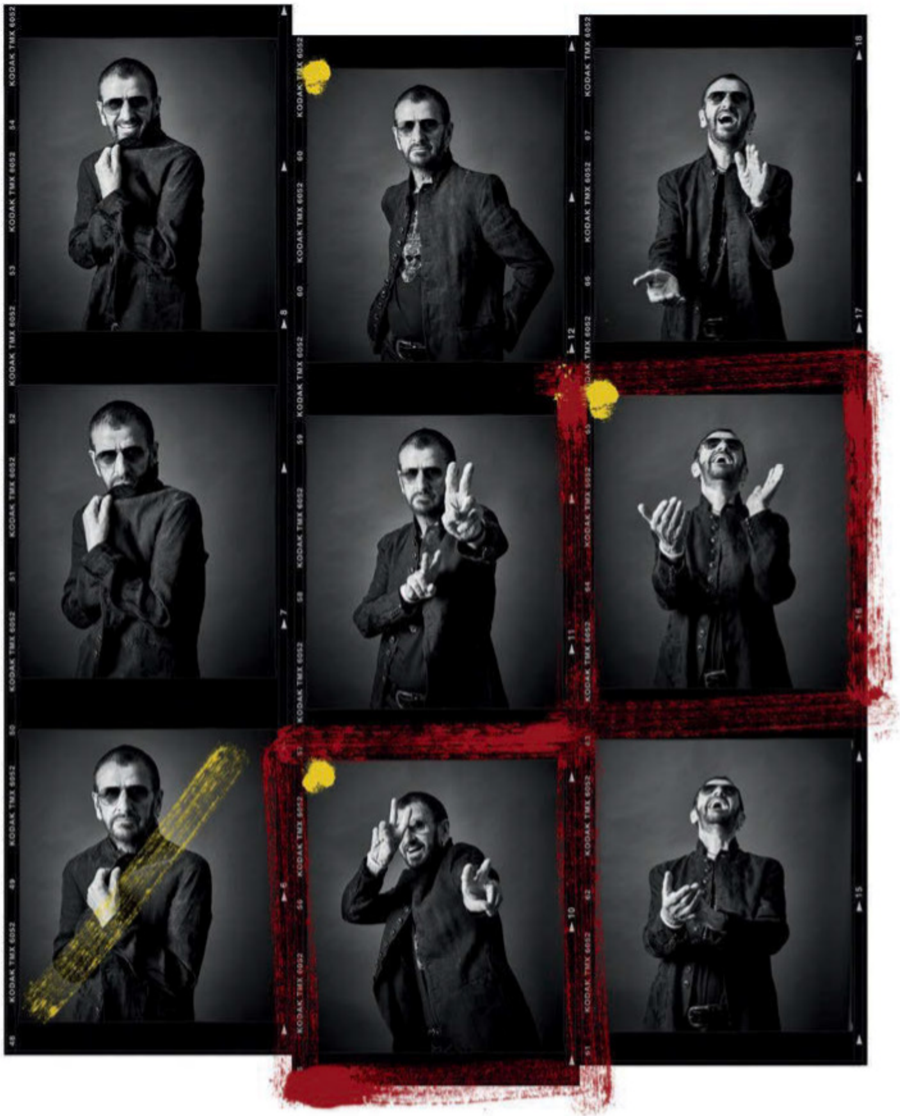
Christopher Lee on 120 film, for example, and halfway through he stopped to have tea and smoke a cigar. I kept on shooting. When he saw the ones of him smoking, he didn't want anyone else to see them, and I promised that would be the case. When he died, *The Times* contacted me looking for previously unpublished pictures, so I asked his widow, Lady Lee, if it was okay to release the cigar shots and she said, "oh no, you misunderstood, he just didn't want anyone else to see them as he loved them so much!" I would never go behind anyone's back.'

The Ansel Adams of faces

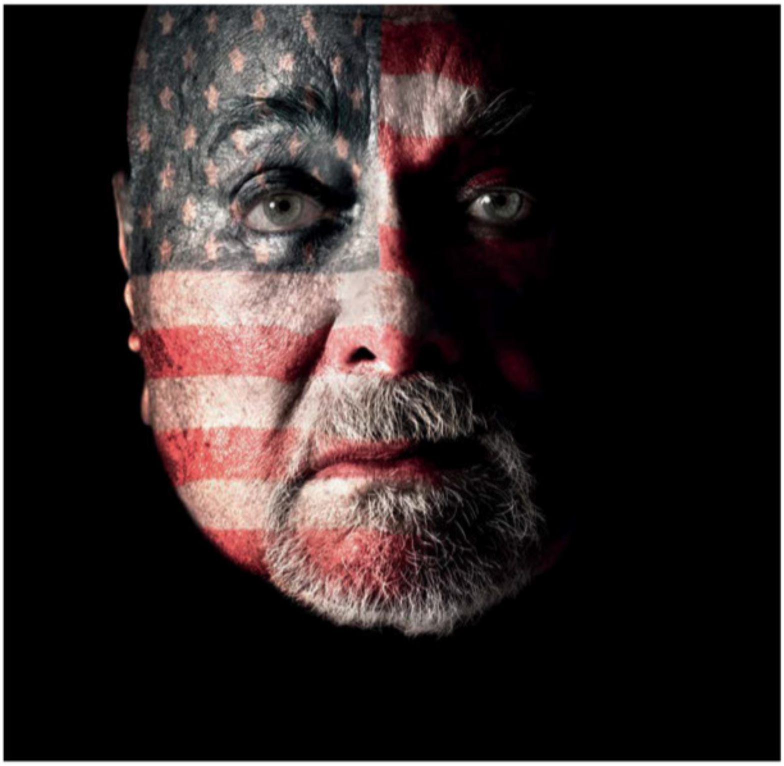
Moving on to Andy's technical approach, he shares some fascinating insights when discussing his judicious use of backdrops. 'While Lord Snowdon favoured quite complicated backdrops, I like to keep my backdrops simple and undistracting, in order to focus the viewer's attention on the face. I want to capture every nook and cranny. Ringo Starr told me I was the Ansel Adams of faces, capturing the "landscape" of a human face – I was delighted that Ringo appreciated that, and I want this quote on my tombstone!'

Andy has also thought carefully about why's he drawn to shooting in black & white, or keeping the hues very muted in his colour portraits. 'For the first 19 years of my career I only shot black & white film on a Mamiya RB67 I bought when I was 18. I later read some psychological research and discovered that there are two parts of the brain, the literal side and the creative side. When we look at a black & white image rather than a colour one, your brain has to work harder for a split second to make sense of what you are seeing, and you look at it longer. I thought, well, in a world of colour celebrity shooters, people will spend longer looking at my black & white portraits. I also like contrasty images, with lots of "chiaroscuro" light and shade, and it just wouldn't look right with too much colour. Everything looks more natural in black or white, or with muted colours.'

Related to this, Andy does minimal post-shoot editing. 'I only use Photoshop to convert digital images to monochrome,



Ringo Starr, 2nd February 2018



Tony Curtis, 27th September 2010

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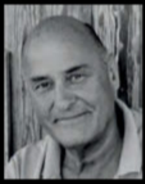
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Anya Taylor-Joy, 15th January 2020

Kate Winslet, 15th August 2008

desaturate colours or lighten or darken backdrops. I never manipulate faces or remove "flaws" as that's not my style. Also I prefer to crop in camera, rather than using the Crop tool.'

It's important to make contact

While Andy does shoot digitally, he remains at heart a passionate film photographer. Indeed, *The Photograph* is also a love letter to the contact sheet (the outer back cover shows a contact sheet of Kate Moss, for example). 'I am dismayed that a lot of students I meet only shoot digitally and don't have access to a darkroom. I feel sorry for photographers who don't experience the passion of working in a darkroom and seeing a contact sheet. Indeed, a big reason for doing *The Photograph* was to show the art of the contact sheet. Yes, it's a functional part of photography as you use it to review and select images, but a contact sheet can be a beautiful piece of photographic art in its own right.'

Andy also believes the whole digital revolution has led to photographers overshooting for the sake of it, rather than taking their time with each frame. It's made portrait sitters more impatient. 'If I am shooting digitally, I actually turn off the image review on the back of the camera. My subjects can wait to see the results, as with film.' While Andy continues to shoot with his trusty Mamiya RB67 he also uses a Phase One with a digital back, particularly favouring an 80mm lens for its sharpness and tendency to slightly distort his sitter's head, revealing pore-deep detail. For lighting, Andy has long favoured Elinchrom flashes. 'I usually have three or four flashes going, due to the fact I won't be editing. I like to 'flash' at different levels of power, as this acts as a fill, and is kinder on the shadow details.'

Andy's parting shot

It's been 35 years since Andy's fateful shoot with Stephen Fry, so what advice does he have for younger photographers wanting to follow in his footsteps? 'The world of celebrity portraiture has totally changed, but my advice to anyone is just to be themselves. As my meeting with *Esquire* magazine showed, you can't mimic anyone else. Also, you need to be as thick-skinned as a rhino and very patient. For at least two years when you are starting out, nobody will care. But hang in there and believe in yourself. The best advice I ever heard came from Rocky Balbao. "It's not how hard you hit, it's how hard you take a hit and still go forward." You will be bashed around and doubt yourself but if you have self-belief, take every "no" on the chin and keep moving forward. One day you will achieve it.'

The god-like genius of Andy Gotts

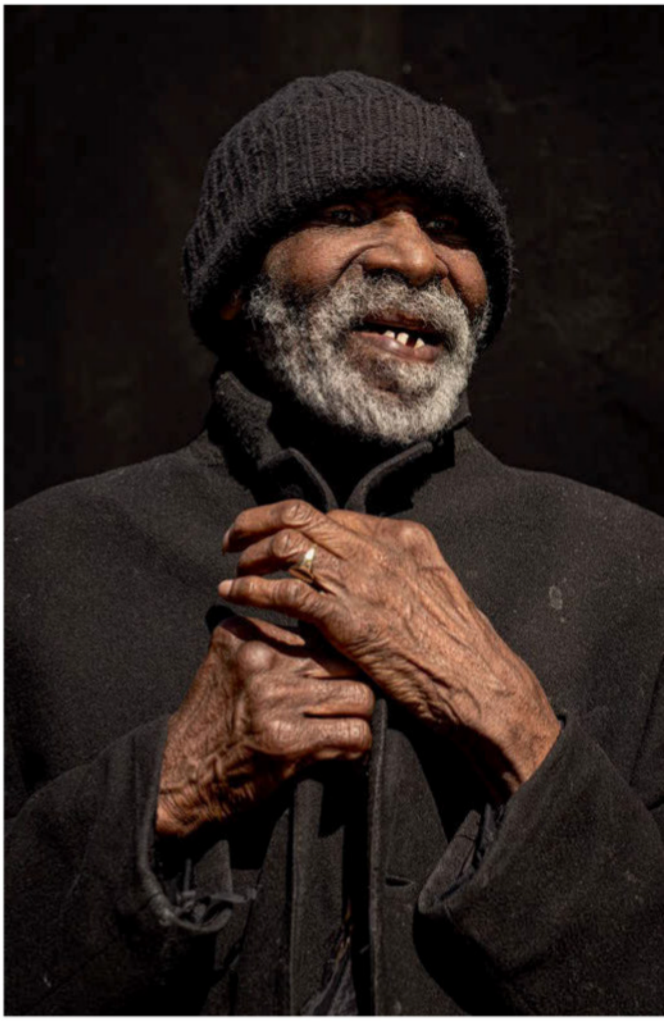
Based in London and New York, Andy Gotts' work is held in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery, and his awards include an MBE in 2012 for his contribution to photography and charity. Over 35 years, his charitable contributions have totalled more than £79 million. This February, he made $1.6 million in one evening for Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler's 'Janie's Fund' for abused girls. A new edition of Andy's latest portrait collection, *The Photograph*, is available in May. For more, see **www.andygotts.com, and @DrGotts on Instagram**

Andy's latest book is on Amazon (bit.ly/gottsportrait)

ALL PICTURES © JAN ENKELMANN

Building Brixton

A new photography book sets out to capture the characters and spirit of Brixton. **Peter Dench** finds out more



Brixton, part of the London Borough of Lambeth, has undergone profound social and cultural transformations over the past five decades, evolving from a working-class district into one of London's most dynamic and contested spaces. It became synonymous with the Windrush Generation, as Caribbean migrants who arrived in the UK from the 1940s onwards settled in the area, shaping its identity through music, food, and entrepreneurial spirit.

Racial tensions and economic struggles led to unrest, most notably the 1981 Brixton Riots, sparked by heavy-handed policing and deep-seated inequalities. Despite these challenges, Brixton emerged as a hub of Black British culture, with reggae, dub, and later hip-hop thriving in its streets and clubs.

The markets, a reflection of the area's multiculturalism, became landmarks of resilience and community. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, crime and poverty remained issues, but so did a strong sense of local identity. The area saw waves of activism against racial injustice and economic marginalisation, even as regeneration projects brought investment.

Brixton has long been a draw for renowned photojournalists, street photographers and weekend hobbyists. Six-foot-three German documentary photographer Jan Enkelmann has lived within a five-minute bicycle ride of Brixton since moving to London 25 years ago. He says, 'It's fair to say it's a community that has taken me a while to build a relationship with, at sometimes making me feel as much an alien as I did the day I arrived.'

Around seven years ago, Jan began earnestly approaching people to ask if he could take their portrait. He continues, 'The camera has often helped me make sense of a location, to see its beauty, its flaws, and contradictions more clearly. The camera has also been my armour, allowing me to approach complete strangers in a way I would otherwise not have been able to. What really started this project was that I wanted to build a better relationship with the people of Brixton.'

Brief encounters

Portraits are the building blocks of his new self-published book, *The Triangle*, named after the area shaped by Brixton Road, Atlantic Road, and Coldharbour Lane where most of the images in the book are taken. Portraits comprise just under half of the images, the result of brief encounters after a split-second decision to approach a person. Some 50% of those he approached ignored him, refused, or reacted with the flip of a finger. On bad days, the rejection rate was closer to 90%.

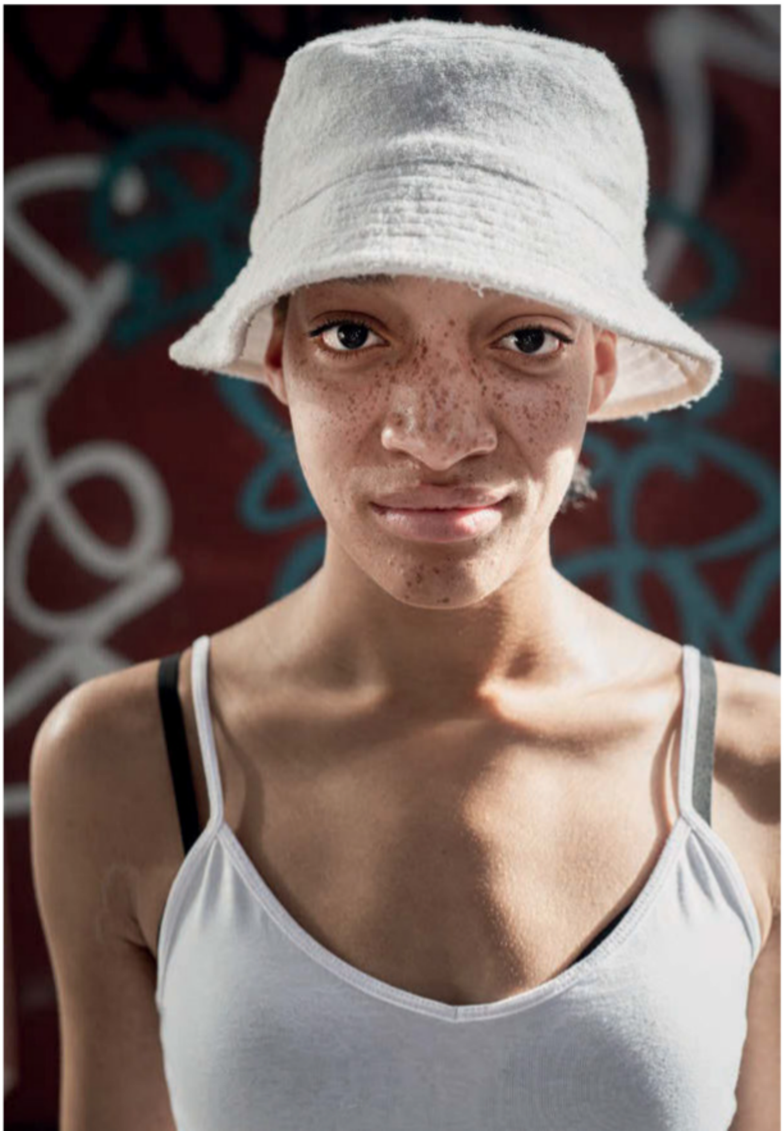
When successful, he would briefly explain his project and rarely take more than three frames. 'I tend not to direct the sitters and just try to let them be themselves. If they smile for the camera, I might ask for an extra frame with a more serious expression.' Over time, some who had initially ignored or refused him came to understand that he wasn't a tourist dropping in to rob a 'been to Brixton' shot, but was

Left: Electric Avenue, July 2020

Top: Brighton Terrace, June 2024

Right: Windrush Square, February 2023

Above: Pope's Road, February 2023



Left: Brixton Road, July 2022

committed to building a long-term visual legacy of the community.

Characters also became more familiar to Jan. 'Certain people, I've probably stopped three or four times. They come in different outfits all the time, and it's only when I stop them again that I realise I've photographed them before. That's interesting – what makes me approach someone? I can't put my finger on what these criteria are, but the fact that I stop the same people again means there's something drawing me to them.'

Intrigue

The portraits aren't necessarily of the most extravagant-looking people in Brixton. A youth in a buttoned-up blue raincoat reclines on a bus; a man dressed in sports-casual clothing sits on yellow-striped stairs. In some images, it's not immediately clear whether the subject is posing for the camera. Each portrait has a quiet, underlying intrigue that allows the viewer to interpret it freely – an effect strengthened by Jan's decision not to include names or details about the subjects' lives. 'You see people who you assume might be homeless, and it turns out they're children's book authors. People who look like drug dealers are actually primary school teachers and the other way round. That was the

OKOLI MARKET

Above: Atlantic Road, April 2021

most surprising element. You have an initial perception, but when you talk to them, they turn out to be something very different.'

To highlight a subject, you have to take beautiful pictures of it. The book's consistency of saturated light and the way Brixton is portrayed – the brick walls, omnipresent graffiti, and shop signs – creates a distinct atmosphere. Diversity of skin colour and gender is represented, but not in a box-ticking way; rather, it emerges naturally from Jan's instinct to create compelling portraits that tell a story.

Jan has been making and publishing photo books for almost 20 years, gaining a wealth of experience in self-publishing as well as working with traditional publishers. As both a photographer and graphic designer, he has honed his skills in editing, sequencing, book design, paper selection, printing, and navigating the evolving landscape of independent publishing. His previous book, *Pause*, which documented the empty streets of central London during the first coronavirus lockdown, was funded (like *The Triangle*) through a Kickstarter campaign. It reached its goal in just 40 hours, won the German Photobook Award in Silver, and sold out its initial print run within weeks.

The Triangle presented its own challenges. 'I started planning, editing, and trying to put pictures together for a book about two years ago, and it was a really drawn-out process. If you look at it, you might not see why it took such a long time, but for me, it was really important to maintain a consistent atmosphere and mood across the book. Lots of people smile for the camera, and I've got great shots of happy, smiling people – but they just didn't feel right, so none of those images made it in. There's consistency in terms of facial expressions and how people interact with the camera.' The choice to shoot exclusively with a 50mm prime lens paired with a Nikon D850 or Z9 also lends the book a cohesive visual style.

In recent years, Brixton has been at the heart of London's gentrification debate. The arrival of artisan coffee shops, boutique bars, and property developers has led to rising rents, forcing out long-time residents and businesses. While some celebrate the area's revitalisation, others see it as erasure – a dilution of Brixton's radical and working-class roots. Despite these tensions, Brixton remains a space of creativity, resistance, and reinvention, where history is never far from the present.

It wasn't Jan's intention to make a definitive historic or political statement. *The Triangle* may be specific to Brixton, but its themes are universal – spirit, pride, determination, and resilience… etched on the faces of those we meet, sitting on the steps or standing on street corners.

FIELDAY
ATLANTIC ROAD

Left: Atlantic Road, June 2023

The Triangle can be pre-ordered via **www.enkelmann.co.uk**. A selection of images from *The Triangle* is currently on display at Photofusion's gallery space in Brixton as part of SELECT/25 until 31 May.

FILM STARS

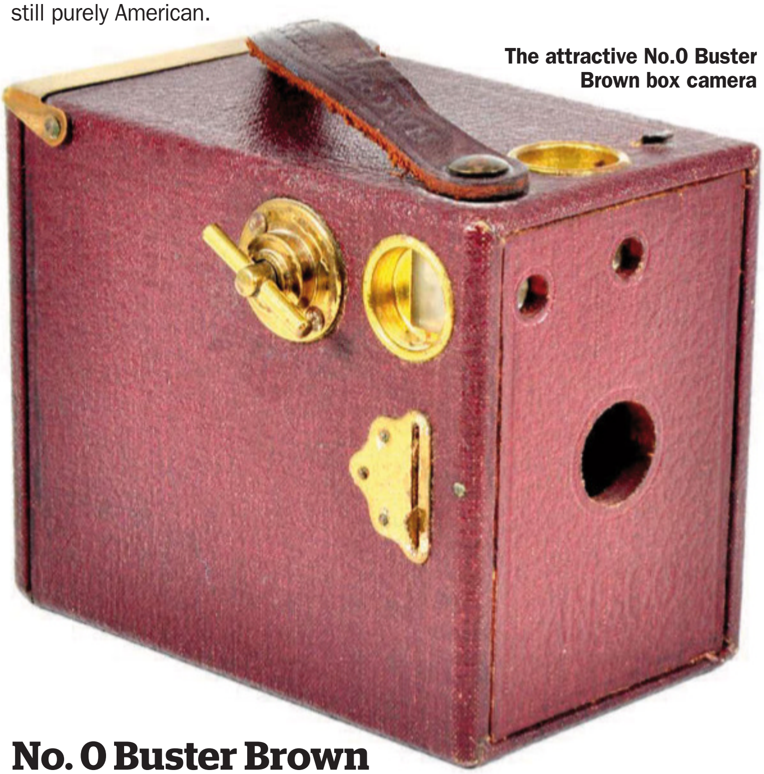
Born in the USA

John Wade remembers the often innovative and sometimes quirky world of American cameras

Think of American camera makers and the first name that comes to mind must be Kodak. The company was a giant. But in its shadow lay many more manufacturers. Some of the cameras they produced were long-lasting, others enjoyed only brief periods of popularity. Today, these cameras are all collectable and some of them are still usable, too.

Ansco

The merger in 1902 of the Anthony Company with Scoville and Adams resulted in a name shortened, in 1907, to Ansco, under which brand cameras of different styles were produced. In 1928 the firm's American interests were merged with the German Agfa company to form Agfa Ansco. Here are two cameras produced while Ansco was still purely American.

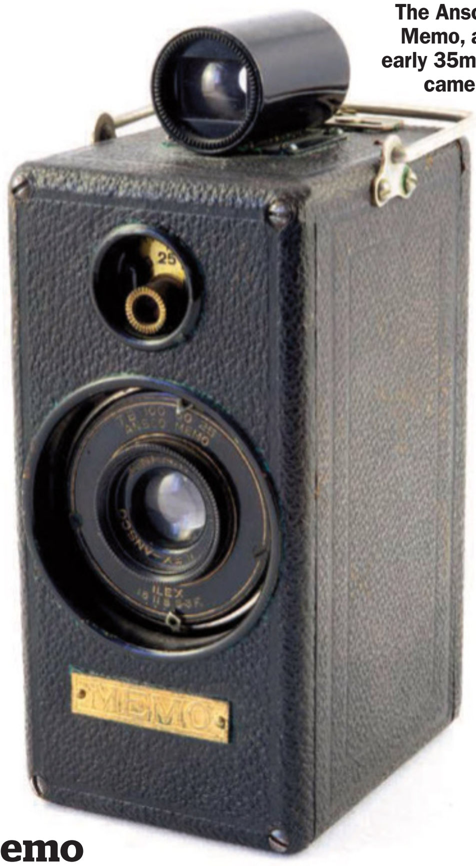

The attractive No.0 Buster Brown box camera

No. 0 Buster Brown

ORIGINAL COST: $1

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £15-20

Although a basic box camera, the Buster Brown is more attractive than most due to its smaller-than-normal size and burgundy-coloured leather body covering with brass fittings. It was produced in 1923 to take 127 film for eight 4x6.5cm exposures. Similar to the way Kodak took its Brownie name from elf-like characters created by Canadian children's author and illustrator Palmer Cox, so the Buster Brown name originated in a comic strip character created by cartoonist Richard Outcault.


The Ansco Memo, an early 35mm camera

Memo

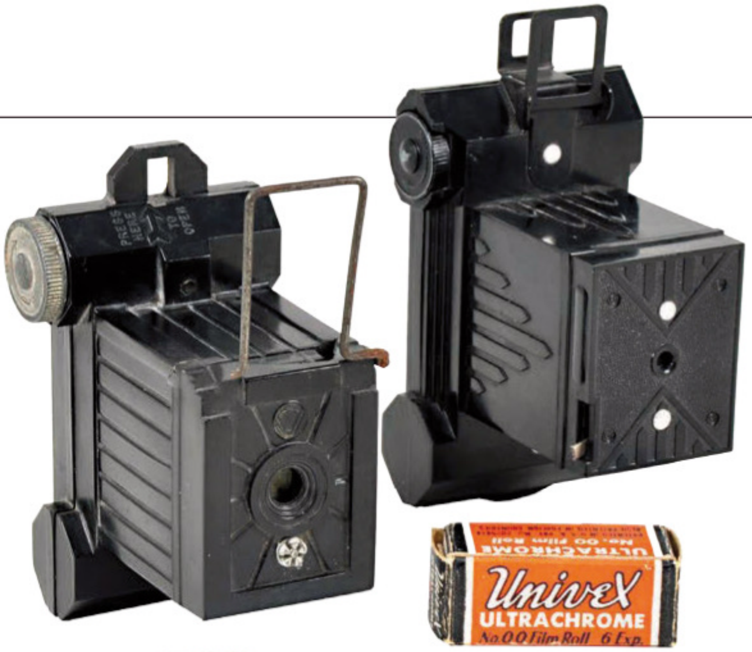
ORIGINAL COST: $20

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £80-120

In 1927, only two years after the Leica popularised 35mm, Ansco introduced this 35mm half-frame camera in an unusual upright design. Because the film runs vertically, it allows landscape-shape pictures 18x24mm. It is wound by a sliding button on the camera back which pulls and pushes the film from one cassette to another. A tubular viewfinder is mounted on top of the body, the lens is a Cinemat 40mm f/6.3 and the shutter is speeded 1/25–1/100sec.

Universal Camera Corporation

Otto Wolff Githens was head of a New York loan company financing a taxicab business. Needing an expert in taxicab insurance, he called in Jacob J Shapiro, vice-president of an insurance company specialising in this field. The two men formed a friendship. Neither knew much about cameras, but they understood business opportunities. What they saw, in the early 1930s, was that 35mm photography was becoming popular. They also noticed that 35mm cameras were expensive, and that the long lengths of film they used could be off-putting to snapshot photographers more familiar with cheaper and shorter film lengths in their roll film cameras. As an aside, they also noted that Kodak had been successful in launching cameras which needed a specific size of film for which buyers were required to return to Kodak over and over again. Based on these principles, in 1933, Githens and Shapiro formed the Universal Camera Corporation with a mission to bring their own version of 35mm photography cheaply to the masses.



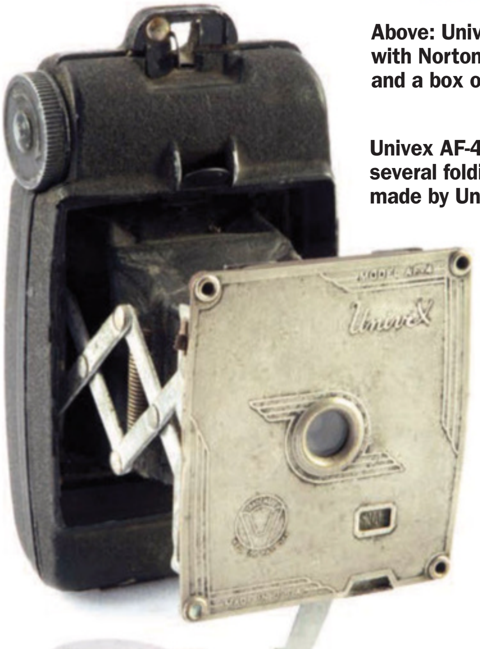
Above: Universal's Univex A (left) with Norton's version of the camera and a box of Univex No.00 film

Univex A

ORIGINAL COST: 39 cents

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £10-20

Designed by Norton Laboratories in New York, who went on to produce their own version, the Univex A is made of plastic with a fold-up metal viewfinder frame, a fixed focus and aperture lens and single speed shutter. It shoots six exposures on Universal's own 00 size roll film with a picture size of 29x38mm, slightly larger than the traditional 35mm size of 24x36mm. After the first few years, the company claimed 15 million sales.



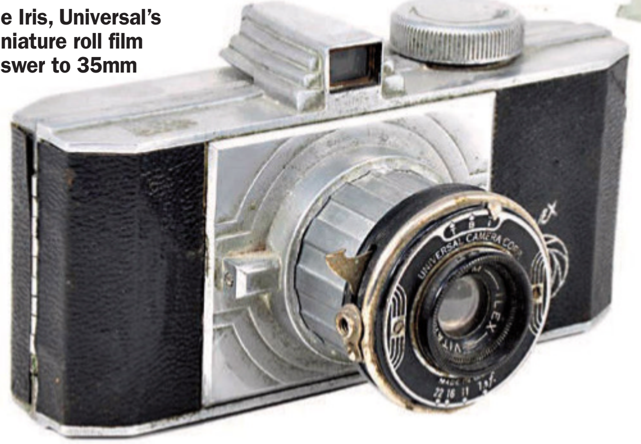
Univex AF-4, one of several folding cameras made by Universal

Univex AF-4

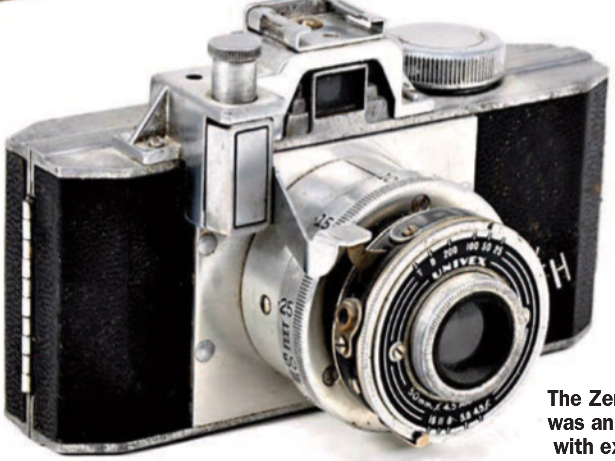
ORIGINAL COST: $1

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £15-25

From around 1935, Universal produced a range of simple folding cameras in which the front panel pulled out from the body on scissor-like struts, rather like the Vest Pocket Kodak. Each took Universal's 00 film. The Univex AF-4 uses a simple meniscus lens and single speed shutter incorporated into a polished aluminium panel. Other folding Univex cameras include the AF, AF-2, AF-3 and AF-5.



The Iris, Universal's miniature roll film answer to 35mm



The Zenith was an Iris with extra bits added

Iris and Zenith

ORIGINAL COSTS: $4.95 & $8.97

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £10-15 & £20-40

In 1938, Universal made the Iris to use size 00 film. Made of cast metal, it is equipped with a non-focusing Vitar 50mm f/7.9 lens which pulls out from the body on a metal tube to offer apertures down to f/22. The shutter is released by a lever beside the lens for instantaneous, brief or time exposures.

In 1939, when Universal launched a new camera, they took the Iris, stuck some extra bits on it and called it the Zenith. The lens is attached to the end of a focusing tube and shutter speeds from 1/25sec to 1/200sec are added. A bridge-like arrangement built over the viewfinder incorporates an accessory shoe plus a shutter button linked to the release lever beside the lens.

Mercury I and II

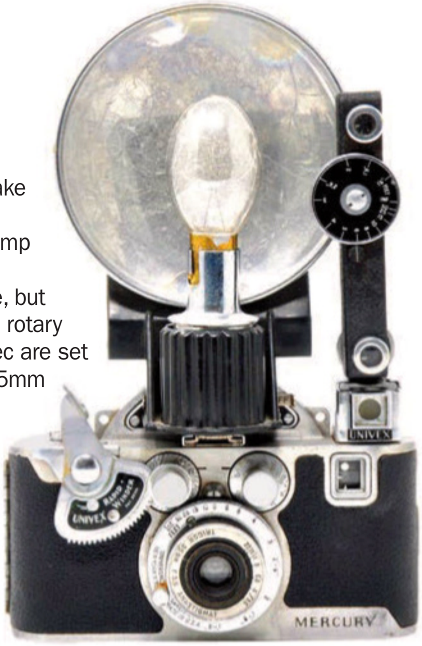
ORIGINAL COSTS: $25 & $82.90

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £35-45 & £15-30

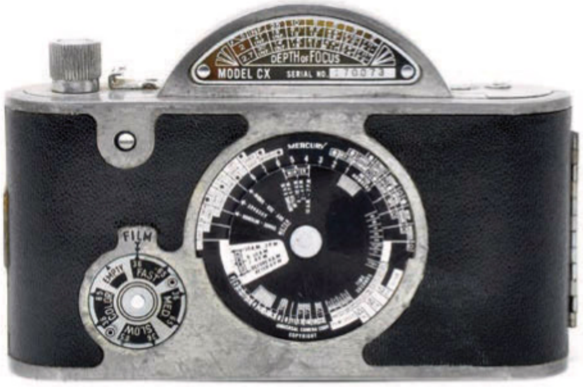
The first Mercury, from 1938, is a strangely shaped camera made to take 18x24mm pictures on Universal's No.200 film. A large semi-circular hump emerges from the top of the body, inscribed with a depth of focus scale, but actually there to house the camera's rotary shutter. Speeds of 1/20–1/1,000sec are set on a knob to the right of the Tricor 35mm f/3.5 lens. Film wind is by a second knob to the left of the lens.

Accessories include a lever wind that screws into the cable release socket and connects with a sprocketed film wind knob, a flashgun which fits into one of the camera's two accessory shoes to make electrical contact without the need for a flash lead, and an extinction meter which slots into a second accessory shoe, with its own shoe on top to accommodate a rangefinder. The back of the camera incorporates a complicated exposure calculator that involves dialling in time of year, time of day, weather conditions, etc against numerous subject types and film speeds.

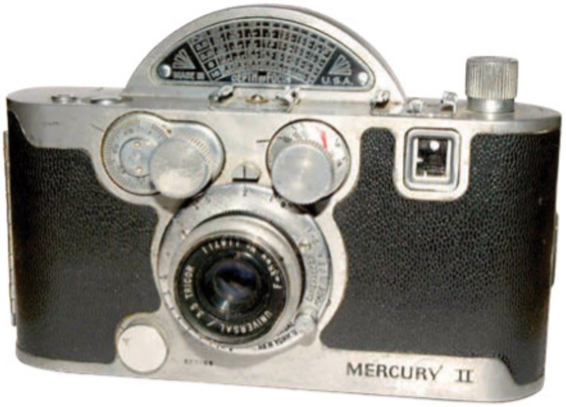
In 1945, Universal produced the Mercury II, similar to the first model, but for half-frame size images on normal 35mm film.



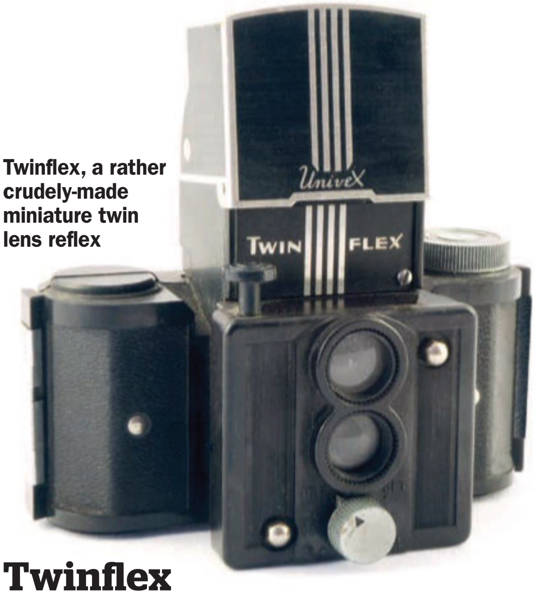
Mercury I with its full complement of accessories



The complicated exposure calculator on the back of the Mercury I



Mercury II, similar to the first model but made for standard 35mm cassettes



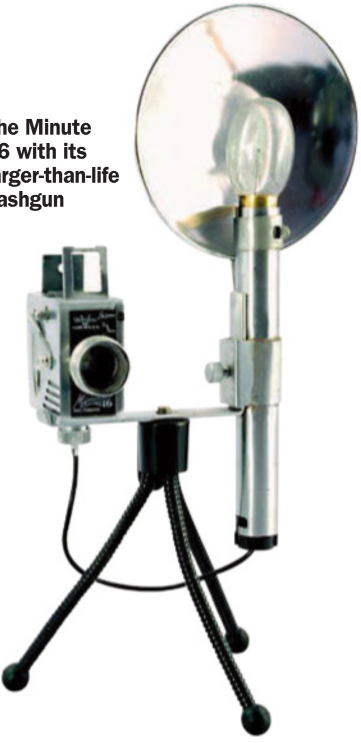
Twinflex, a rather crudely-made miniature twin lens reflex

Twinflex

ORIGINAL COST: $2.05

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £20-30

Although cheaply made of plastic, with only a meniscus lens, fixed aperture and simple shutter, the Twinflex is a true twin lens reflex with its focusing linked to two lenses, one for taking and one for viewfinding. A knob on the front moves the lenses back and forth as the upper one focuses its image, via a mirror, onto a small ground-glass screen under a hood on top of the body. It uses Universal's usual size 00 film.



The Minute 16 with its larger-than-life flashgun

Minute 16

ORIGINAL COST: $7.95

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £25-40

In 1949, Universal entered the subminiature market with the Minute 16. The meniscus lens is fixed focus, but three apertures of f/6.3, f/11 and f/16 are available, although the shutter offers only a single speed. It takes 16mm film in a tiny cartridge wound by a lever attached to a claw mechanism inside the body. For an extra $3.95, the Minute 16 could be purchased with its own flashgun which was more than three times the size of the camera. It appears to be a precision-made subminiature, but in fact, the internal workings are quite crude.

The Universal Camera Corporation invested serious money into the development of the Minute 16 at a time when 16mm looked like the next big thing in camera design. But because of mechanical problems and low-quality lenses, it was a failure and it was the last camera to be produced by the company which closed in 1952.

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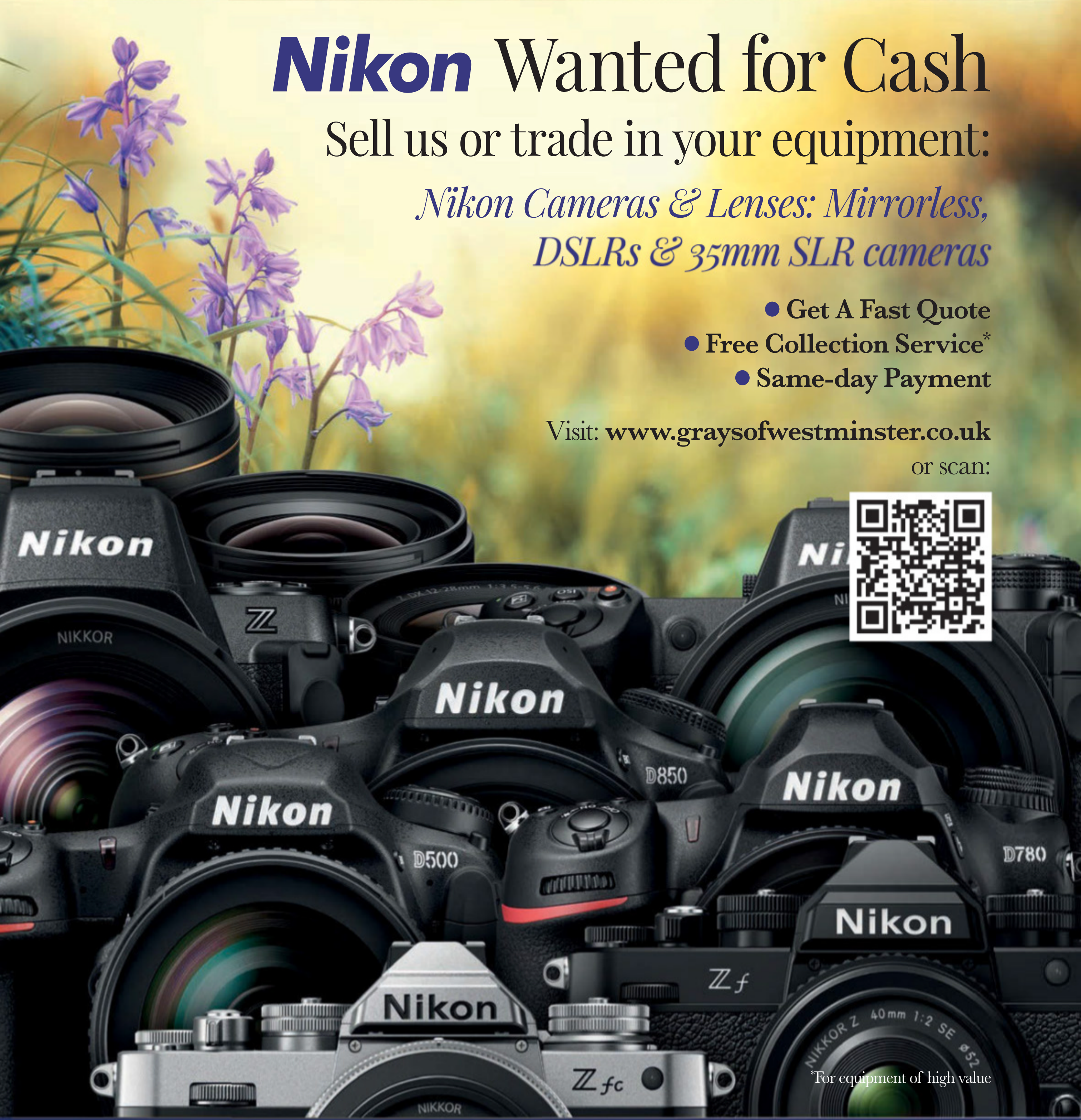

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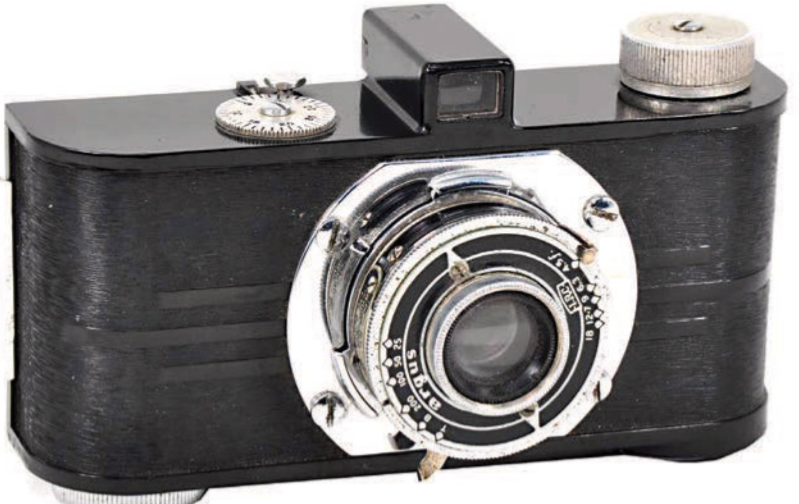
Argus Inc

Charles A Verschoor was a businessman who, looking for ways to make money during the American Depression years, formed the International Radio Corporation to manufacture inexpensive radios. The company was very successful but traditionally sales fell off in spring and early summer. So Verschoor turned to finding a product that would be popular at that time of year and which would capitalise on how his company had learned to handle Bakelite. The result was a huge range of Argus mostly 35mm cameras. Here are just three.



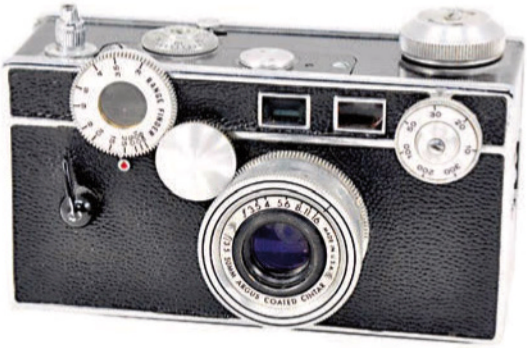
The Argus A introduced many Americans to 35mm for the first time

Argus A

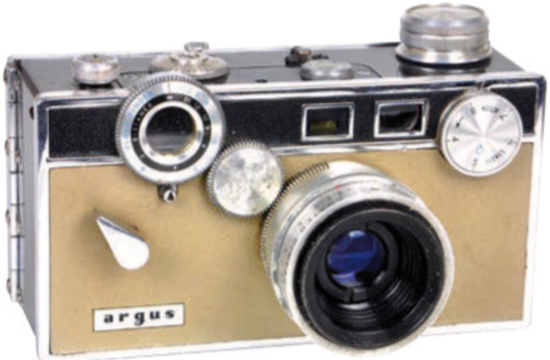
ORIGINAL COST: $9.95

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £15-25

Launched in 1936 and made of Bakelite with metal trimmings in an attractive Art Deco design, the Argus A was largely responsible for introducing 35mm to American photographers. The Argus Anastigmat 50mm f/4.5 lens pops out on a short metal tube and click stops at two positions to focus at 6-15ft or 15ft to infinity. The lens stops down in settings f/4.5, f/6.3, f/9, f/12.7, f/18; shutter speeds run 1/25-1/200sec. In its first few weeks on the market more than 30,000 cameras were sold and the price went up to $12.50.



Argus C3, popularly known as The Brick



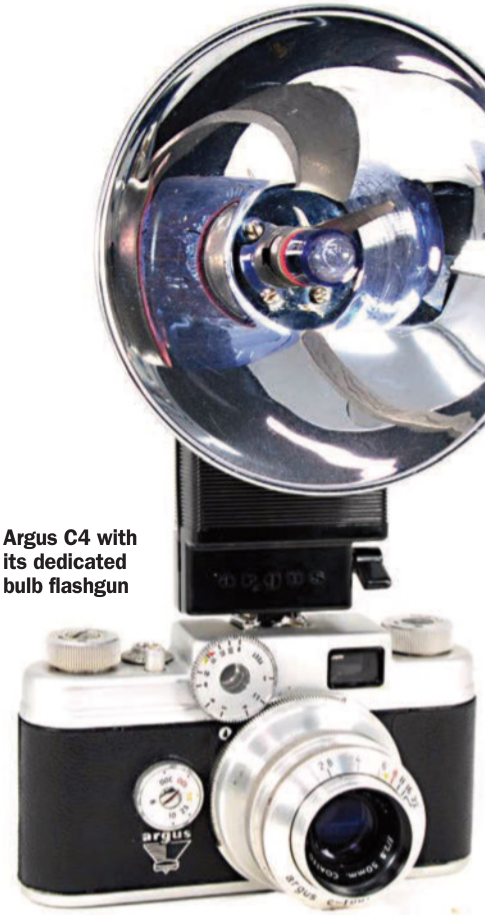
The Match-Matic version of the C3

Argus C3

ORIGINAL COST: $35

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £20-25

Launched in 1939, the Argus C3 was renowned for three things: its nickname of The Brick (due to its shape), the sharpness of its lens and the unreliability of its rangefinder. In its lifetime, the camera clocked up more than 2 million sales. Shutter speeds of 1/10–1/300sec are set on a dial in the front corner of the body. Another dial protrudes above the top plate to be rotated whilst looking through the rangefinder window beside the viewfinder. As well as coupling to the rangefinder, the dial is connected via a cogwheel to the focusing ring of the 50mm f/3.5 Cintar lens. Apertures are set on a ring around the lens. There were many versions of the C3, and the last, produced with light brown leatherette in 1958, was called the Match-Matic. In 2002 it was used by a character in the film *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, gaining it the unofficial name of the Harry Potter Camera.



Argus C4 with its dedicated bulb flashgun

Argus C4

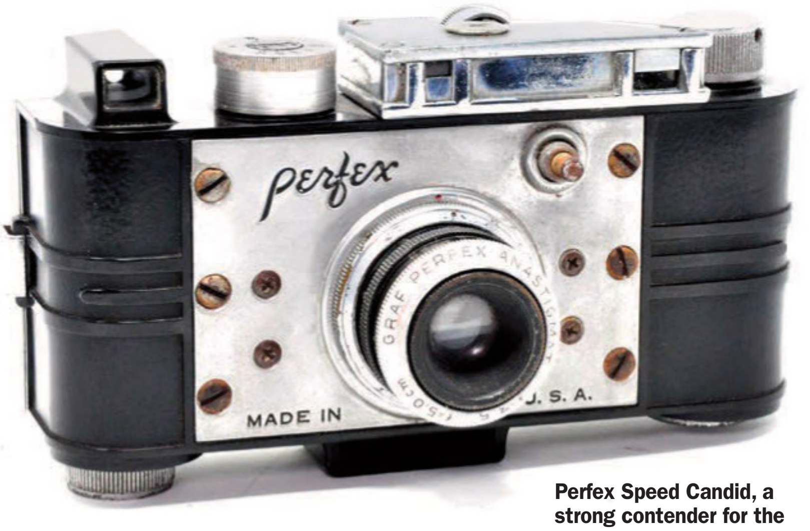
ORIGINAL COST: $49.50

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £20-30

In 1951 the basic C3 design was revamped with a minor nod towards the look of the Leica. The fixed 50mm f/2.8 Coated Cintar lens retains the front-mounted focusing dial protruding above the height of the camera but now geared straight to the lens without the intervening cogwheel used by the C3. Shutter speeds, set on a dial on the front of the body next to the lens, run 1/10-1/300sec. When the shutter release is depressed it stays down until the film is wound, thus preventing double exposures. An early form of hot shoe connected directly with a bulb flashgun, without the need for a separate cable.

Candid Camera Corporation of America

Founded in 1938 by businessmen Carl and Joseph Price with Benjamin Edelman, the company produced ten or so cameras, all but one incorporating the word 'Perfex' into its name.



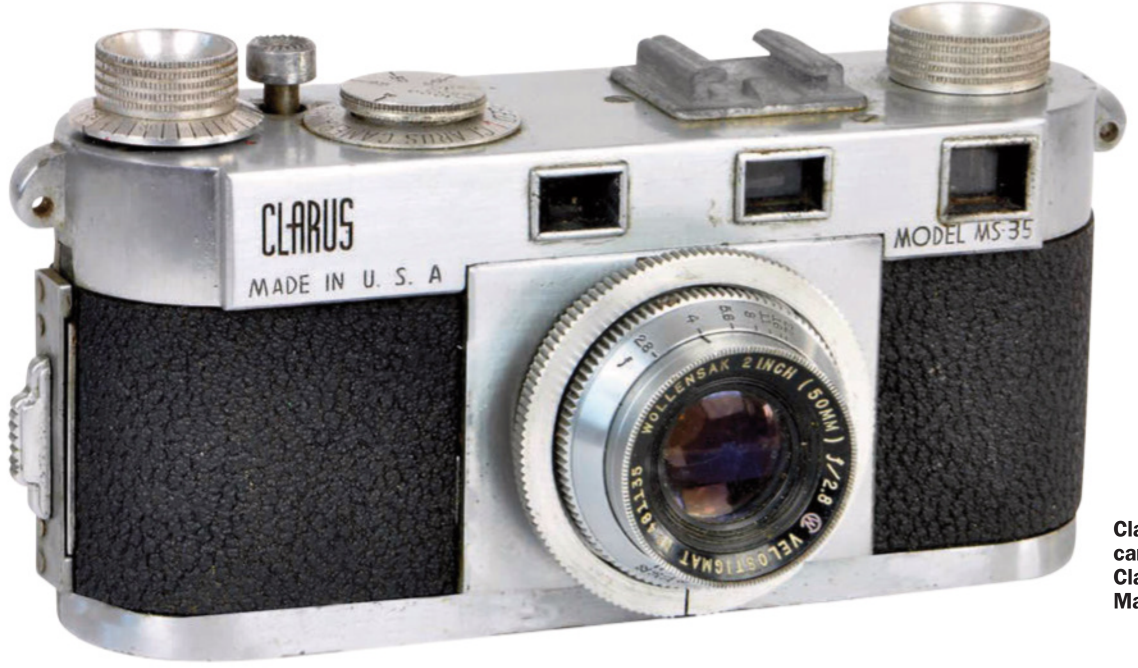
Perfex Speed Candid, a strong contender for the ugliest camera ever made

Perfex Speed Candid

ORIGINAL COST: $25

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £20-35

Make no mistake: this camera is *ugly*. But back in 1938, it paved an inexpensive entry into 35mm photography. It's made of die-cast metal and Bakelite and was the first American camera with a focal plane shutter, speeded 1/25-1/500sec. Interchangeable lenses using a 38mm screw mount include 2in f/3.5 and f/2.8, 4in f/4.5 and 6in f/4.5 (America was still very much into imperial measurements in those days). A rotary exposure calculator on the back of the body is used in conjunction with an extinction meter perched on the top. There's a rangefinder, but it isn't coupled to the lens, and the shutter release on the front of the body is for left-hand operation. An interchangeable back with focusing screen plus extension tubes were available for close-up work.



Clarus M-35, the only camera produced by the Clarus Camera Manufacturing Company

Clarus Camera Manufacturing Company

Not exactly America's biggest camera maker, this company was established to produce only one model. It was announced in 1939, planned for launch in 1940, but due to the outbreak of World War II, it didn't reach the market until 1946.

Clarus M-35

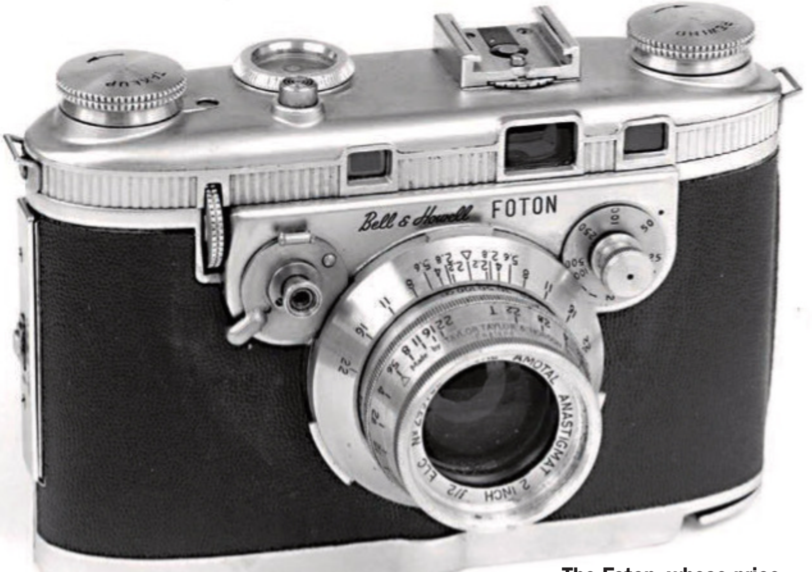
ORIGINAL COST: $59.50

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £20-35

This was originally advertised as 'America's finest 35mm camera'. On paper, it looked like a winner: coupled rangefinder, focal plane shutter speeded 1/25-1/1,000sec, a choice of two 50mm f/2.8 standard lenses interchangeable with 35mm f/3.5 wideangle and 101mm f/3.5 telephoto. Unfortunately its rather ugly, chunky design proved heavy and uncomfortable to hold and it suffered intermittent shutter faults throughout its life. By the time the company managed to rectify the shutter problems it was too late and the Clarus ceased production in 1952.

Bell & Howell

This company was formed in 1907 by cine film projector inventor Albert Howell and film projectionist Donald Bell. They were best known for their movie cameras aimed at both amateur cinematographers and professional filmmakers. The company also made one notable still camera.



The Foton, whose price contributed strongly to its downfall

Foton

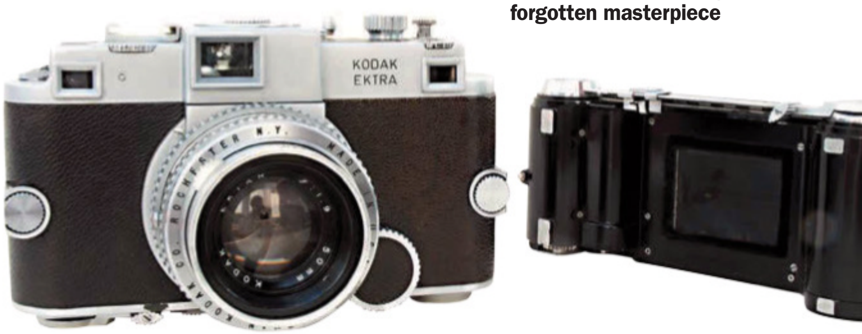
ORIGINAL COST: $498

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £600-800

In 1948, Bell & Howell's clockwork-driven movie camera technology was born again in the Foton 35mm rangefinder camera which incorporated a clockwork motor drive to wind the film between exposures. A lever adjusts the motor for single wind or for continuous shooting up to six frames per second. The Foton is a quality camera, with a standard 2in f/2 Cooke Amotol Anastigmat interchangeable lens, calibrated not in f-stops, but in T-stops, which measure actual light transmission, a system used more in the film industry. The standard lens screws into its mount, whereas 4in and 12in telephoto lenses bayonet onto lugs surrounding the mount. The strange aperture setting system confused potential buyers, and the high price tag when launched made the camera too expensive. It remained in production for only a few years.

Eastman Kodak Company

Okay, we can't talk about American cameras without mentioning The Big One. The name 'Kodak' was coined by businessman, inventor, and entrepreneur George Eastman who, after playing around with words, found that the letter K became a favourite. His made-up word 'Kodak', he explained, was short, not capable of mispronunciation and did not resemble anything else. It was initially used for the first roll film camera, simply called The Kodak. That was in 1888, and the sheer quantity of cameras that followed is too large to even think about listing. So we'll settle for describing just one American Kodak camera – and it could have been the best.



The Kodak Ektra, shown with its spare back, something of a forgotten masterpiece

Kodak Ektra

ORIGINAL COST: $300

GUIDE PRICE NOW: £500-700

Launched in 1941, the Ektra was a true system camera whose big feature was interchangeable film backs which could be pre-loaded to enable the photographer to change from one film to another fast and with minimum fuss. The focal plane shutter is speeded 1–1/1,000sec and the 50mm standard lens is interchangeable with a range of six accessory lenses from 35mm wideangle to 153mm telephoto. The viewfinder has automatic parallax compensation for each lens. It was sold with a Kodak Ektar f/3.5 or f/1.9 standard lens. Interchangeable film backs cost $55. Other accessories include an angled viewfinder and a ground glass screen back for composing the picture directly through the lens. Unfortunately the year the Ektra was launched also marked the year the Americans entered World War II, putting production on hold for the duration. In 1946, Kodak considered building the camera again. However, with an estimated retail price of $700 at a time when a Leica could be bought for $400, the project was abandoned.

In 1978, the Ektra name was resurrected by Kodak for a series of basic 110 film snapshot cameras. How the mighty had fallen.

Not only, but also...

Other American camera names to look out for include: Bolsey, Contura, Delta, Detrola, Graphic, Hollywood, Kamra, Kardon, Kombi, Medalist, Picture Box, Rapitake, Realist, Revere, Spartus, Tri-Vision, Videon, View-Master, Vokar, Winpro, Zephyr... and probably more.

Gleesfun
G11PRO 6K CAMERA DRONE
Pro-Level Clarity
3-AXIS BRUSHLESS GIMBAL
6K
6K PHOTO
4K
4K/30fps VIDEO
70 min
70mins Flight Time
10000ft
10000ft Digital Transmission
Cruise Control

amazon Gleesfun G11Pro

This lens delivers good results, especially considering its strikingly low price
Fujifilm X-T5, 1/5sec at f/4, ISO 125

Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7

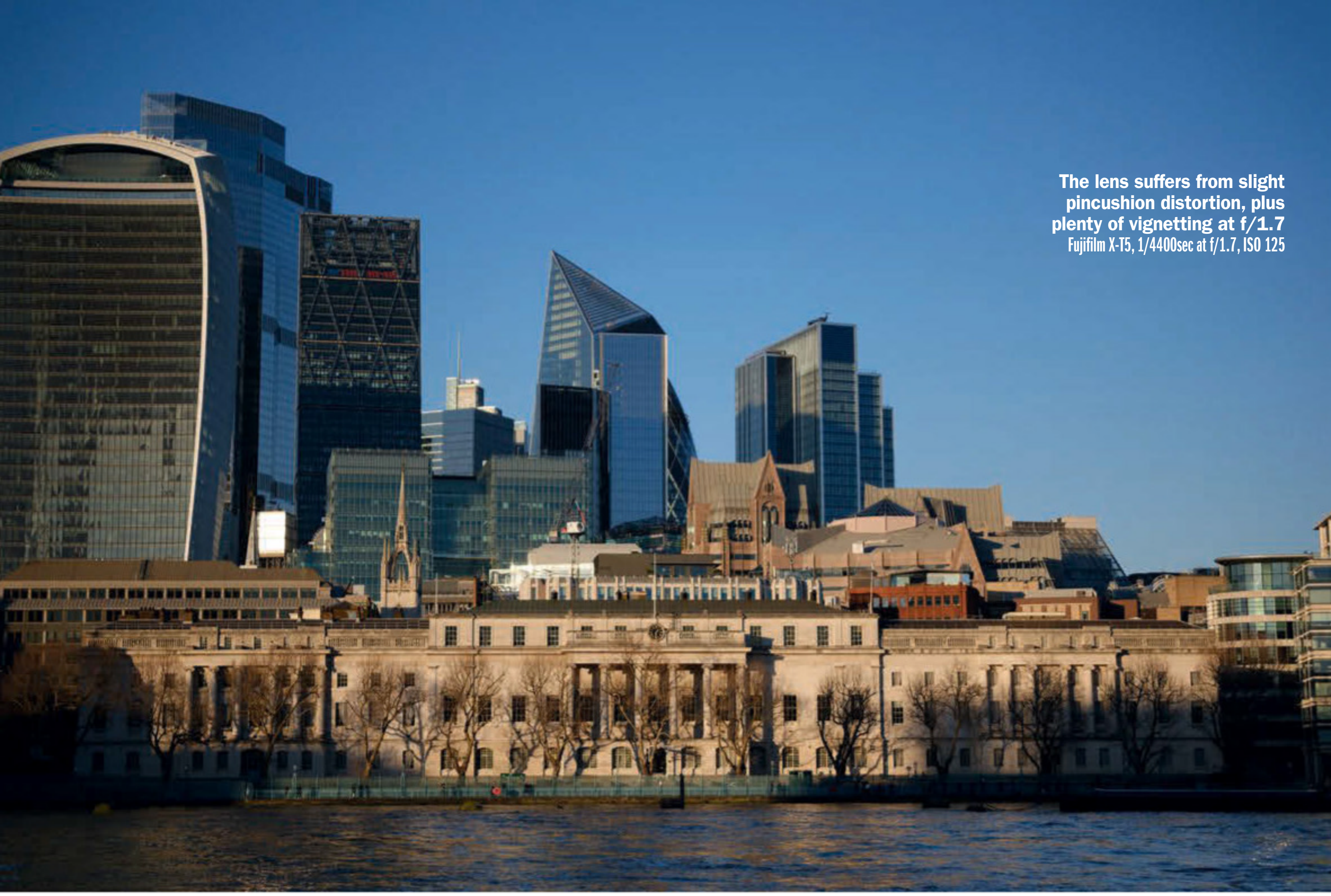
ø52mm 0.33m/1.1ft
AF 35mm 1:1.7 STM ASPH ED IF
APS-C Frame
AF 35/1.7 XF

It's one of the cheapest autofocus lenses you can buy, but how does this APS-C format prime measure up in real-world use? **Andy Westlake** takes a look

Viltrox is one of several Chinese makers currently shaking up the lens market with strikingly affordable designs. Its AF 35mm F1.7 is an autofocus standard prime for APS-C cameras, offering a field of view equivalent to a 53mm lens on full-frame. This makes it suitable as an everyday lens for a wide range of subjects. With a considerably larger aperture than a kit zoom, it should be good for low-light shooting, or when you wish to blur away an out-of-focus background. It's available in Fujifilm X, Nikon Z, and Sony E mounts, and costs just £139. I tested the X-mount version.

This lens is part of Viltrox's entry-level 'Air' range, all of which share essentially the same external design and dimensions. For APS-C shooters, there are also 25mm F1.7 and 56mm F1.7 optics, while full-frame users get 20mm F2.8, 40mm F2.5, and 50mm F2.0 lenses. All of these lenses are similarly affordable.

Given its super-low price point, the Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7 doesn't have a great deal of competition. The closest alternative is the very similar Fujifilm XC 35mm F2, which costs only a little more at £159. But there's nothing quite like that for other brands. Sony makes an optically stabilised E 35mm F1.8 OSS, but it's more than twice the price, at £325. Nikon's most-affordable alternative is the Nikkor Z DX 24mm F1.7, but it's



The lens suffers from slight pincushion distortion, plus plenty of vignetting at f/1.7
Fujifilm X-T5, 1/4400sec at f/1.7, ISO 125

more expensive at £199, and of course rather wider. So is the Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7 a cut-price pretender, or a genuine contender?

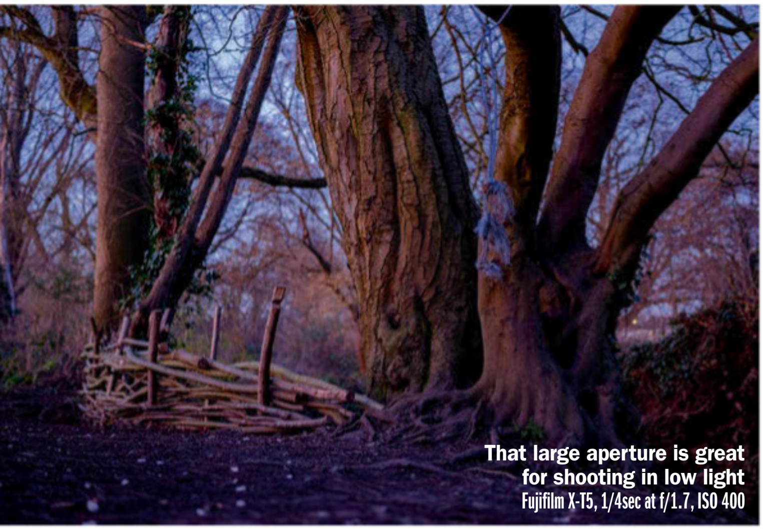
Features

Looking first at the optics, Viltrox has constructed the lens using 11 elements in 9 groups. This includes 2 elements made of high refractive-index (HR) glass, 1 made of extra-low dispersion (ED) glass, plus an aspherical element. Together, these should reduce colour fringing and help maintain sharpness towards the corners of the frame. On paper, these optics look more sophisticated than Fujifilm's 9-element, 6-group design.

Autofocus uses stepper motor (STM) technology, promising fast, quiet and accurate focusing. The minimum focus distance is 33cm, which gives a maximum magnification of 0.13x. Focusing is internal.

It should come as no surprise, given the price, that there's no weather-sealing of any description. However, Viltrox has applied a water- and oil-repellent coating to help keep the front element clean. The filter thread is 52mm and a lens hood comes in the box. It reverses neatly over the barrel for storage.

Like other Viltrox lenses, a USB-C port is embedded into the mount for upgrading the firmware, if required. At the time of writing, though, the firm hasn't delivered any updates.



That large aperture is great for shooting in low light
Fujifilm X-T5, 1/4sec at f/1.7, ISO 400

Build and handling

Design-wise, there's not much to say here. The lens has just a single external control, with the ridged manual focus ring covering almost half the barrel. It rotates nice and smoothly, with no hard end stops.

At 64mm in diameter, 56.4mm in length, and 170g, the Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7 is a bit larger than the likes of the Nikon Z DX 24mm F1.7 or Fujifilm XC 35mm F2, but not by enough to matter. Despite its lowly price, the lens comes across as perfectly nicely made, with a sturdy-feeling plastic barrel and metal mount. I used it on the Fujifilm X-T5, on which it was a very agreeable lightweight companion.

Unlike Viltrox's more-expensive optics, there's no aperture ring, so you have to use a dial on the camera to change this setting. For Fujifilm users, spinning past the f/16 minimum gives the camera automatic control over the aperture. In effect, this enables the use of program and shutter priority modes.

Autofocus

You might think that with such an affordable lens, there'd be some compromise in terms of autofocus. But that's not particularly the case here. It's not as quick as more-expensive optics, but it's quiet and accurate, and ultimately gets the job done with minimal fuss.

Focus breathing is detectable if you go looking for it, with the angle of view narrowing fractionally at close distances. That won't bother stills

Fine detail gets visibly soft at large apertures and close focus, but the bokeh is lovely
Fujifilm X-T5, 1/120sec at f/1.7, ISO 125

photographers, but it's something that videographers might want to keep an eye on. However, it probably won't be a problem in the normal course of events.

Manual focus works nicely when you need it, with the smoothly rotating ring offering precise control. It works perfectly with all the focusing aids on Fujifilm cameras, too.

> 'Overall sharpness is very good, with crisp detail right across the image when stopped down to its optimum apertures'

Performance

But how about the results – does the Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7's image quality reflect its bargain price? Here I was pleasantly surprised, because in fact it does a very creditable job. Strikingly, it delivers better results than the more expensive Viltrox AF 33mm F1.4 at large apertures when shot side-by-side, with sharper detail towards the edges and considerably reduced colour fringing.

Overall sharpness is very good, with crisp detail right across the image when stopped down to its optimum apertures of around f/4 to f/8. Unsurprisingly it looks slightly softer wide open, especially on the X-T5's 40MP sensor. But you'll only really see this when zooming right into your images on screen. In real-world use, these small differences in sharpness will normally be swamped by shallow depth-of-field effects. Stop down to f/11 or f/16, and fine detail blurs away again slightly due to the unavoidable effect of diffraction. But that might be an acceptable compromise in exchange for extended depth of field.

Detail rendition is generally maintained very well through the focus distance range, too. Not surprisingly, though, images can look distinctly soft when shot wide open at close range, with a dreamy 'glow' around sharp edges that's characteristic of spherical aberration. But you can tease more out of raw files by applying additional Texture and Clarity in raw processing, if you wish. The flipside to this softness is lovely smooth bokeh when shooting close-ups.

Impressively, there's practically no colour fringing visible towards the corners of the frame due to lateral chromatic aberration. There can, however, sometimes be a little green fringing around high-contrast features in out-of-focus backgrounds at large apertures. But again, you have to go looking for it, and generally it's not a problem.

Unusually, Viltrox doesn't appear to be using any software compensation for lens aberrations. As a result, images from the AF 35mm F1.7 suffer from slight pincushion distortion. Most of the time this won't matter, but when you do need perfectly straight lines along the edges of the frame, it can be corrected using a value of -3 in Adobe Camera Raw's Optics tab.

Some pretty strong vignetting can be visible with the aperture wide open, but it goes away almost completely on stopping down to f/4. This is also simple enough to fix in raw processing, if you want to. But often, it will complement the subject anyway.

The lens fares reasonably well when shooting into the light. It's possible to get some prominent flare spots when the sun is directly within the frame, but overall contrast is maintained nicely. It's not so great for sunstars when shooting landscapes, though, giving an indistinct mess rather than nice sharp rays. AP

Verdict

WITH its Air-series range, Viltrox has been doing a great job of delivering small, lightweight and highly affordable lenses. The AF 35mm F1.7 is a case in point. It provides very respectable optics, quiet and accurate autofocus, and perfectly nice build quality, all for a very attractive price. Honestly, a lens this cheap has no right to be this good.

Naturally, you do give up a few niceties compared to more-expensive lenses. Most obviously, there's no weather-sealing, optical stabilisation, or aperture ring. But you'll have to pay considerably more if you need any of these features.

For Fujifilm users, there's still a real choice to be made between this lens and the XC 35mm F2. But with the Viltrox, you're getting a half-stop larger aperture, a metal lens mount, and a hood supplied in the box, all for less money. Even for famously brand-loyal Fujifilm fans, that's got to be a tempting proposition.

For Nikon or Sony APS-C users looking for an everyday prime on a budget, though, the Viltrox AF 35mm F1.7 is a shoo-in recommendation. It's just a shame it's not yet available in Canon RF mount. Hopefully, that will appear in due course.

Amateur Photographer Testbench Recommended ★★★★½

Data file

Price £139
Filter diameter 52
Lens elements 11
Groups 9
Diaphragm blades 9
Aperture f/1.7 – f/16
Minimum focus 33cm
Length 56.4mm
Diameter 64mm
Weight 170g
Lens mount Fujifilm X, Nikon Z, Sony E
Included accessories Caps, hood

Summit Creative Tenzing 30L backpack

Andy Westlake examines a fully featured and relatively affordable outdoor backpack

● £290 ● summitcreativebags.com

Summit Creative is a relatively new brand that aims to offer rugged camera bags for demanding outdoor pursuits at a competitive price. Its Tenzing backpacks bear more than a passing resemblance to Shimoda's Action backpacks but cost less, perhaps in part due to using integrated camera protection rather than interchangeable cubes. I've been testing the smallest 30L model.

This bag is so packed full of features it's difficult to know where to begin. The main compartment is of a two-part design, with the bulk of the bag used for your camera kit and a roll-top upper section for personal items. But a movable inner 'shelf' and clever fold-down internal divider allows you to reallocate space between the two, when you need to carry less camera kit and more clothing or food.

There's a good array of pockets, both internal and external, including a laptop compartment in the back panel. On the front, a full-height pocket can be expanded to hold a gimbal or jacket. Unusually the back opens sideways, which helps to prevent it getting mucky when you open it up.

The harness is especially well designed, with plenty of padding and a moulded back section to help stop you getting too sweaty. You get pockets on both shoulder straps and a useful phone pocket on the belt. Handles on the top, side and back help with stowing the bag on trains and planes.

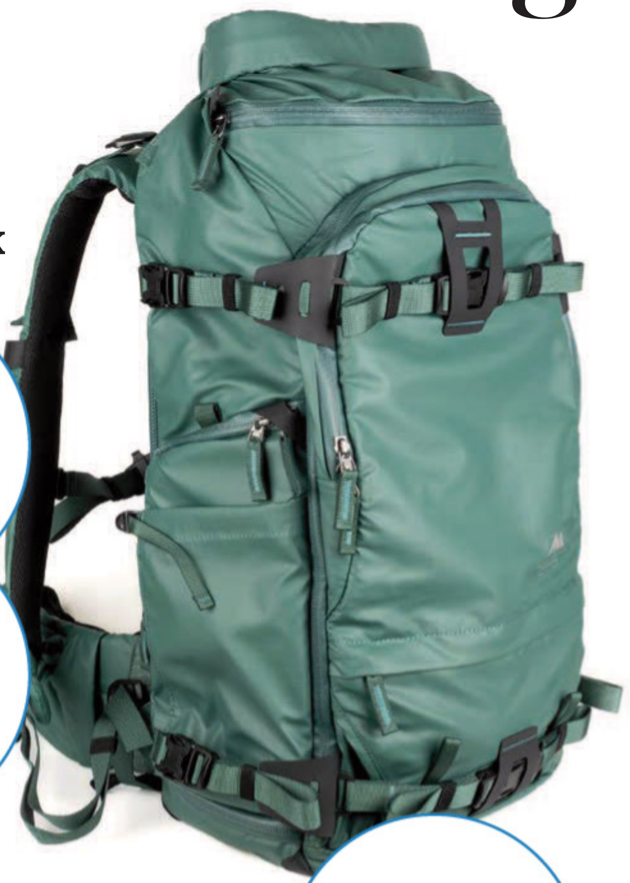
An internal aluminium frame provides rigidity and there's plenty of padding throughout, while the pale blue interior makes it easy to see what's inside. Naturally you get an array of moveable dividers to configure the interior to suit your needs.

In terms of capacity, this bag can swallow an impressive amount of gear. I filled it out with a Sony A7R V with wideangle, standard and telephoto zooms, plus 90mm macro and 135mm portrait lenses, and a couple of small primes. Switching to a smaller format, there's space for my Fujifilm X-T5 and no fewer than ten lenses. The largest lens you're likely to be able to fit inside is a 70-200mm f/2.8 or 100-400mm telezoom.

Verdict

Despite its resemblance to the Shimoda Action 30, the Tenzing 30L is anything but a cheap rip-off. It feels really well-made and is comfortable to carry even when heavily loaded. The sheer versatility of the design is the icing on the cake.

ALL PRICES ARE APPROXIMATE STREET PRICES



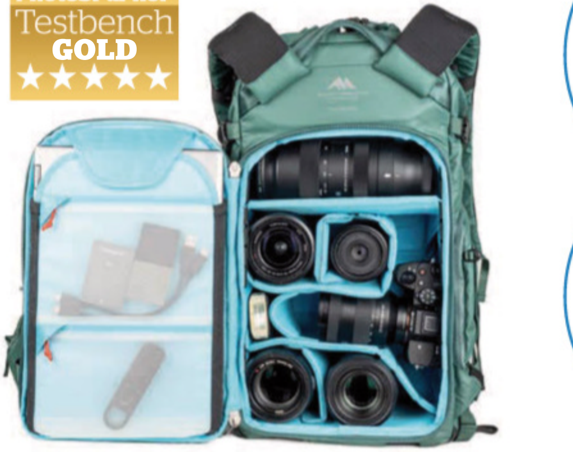
Waist belt

The heavily padded, detachable waist belt has a pocket on one side and attachment points on the other.

Side pockets

Expanding exterior pockets on either side can be used to carry a tripod and water bottle.

Amateur Photographer Testbench GOLD ★★★★★



Straps

There are straps and attachment points all over the bag for carrying such things as hiking poles, skis, or a helmet.

Weather resistant

Coated fabric and waterproof zips are used throughout, and a bright orange rain cover is included.

At a glance

- Side and rear camera access
- 53x29x20cm (exterior)
- 30-litre capacity
- Roll-top and expandable front
- 14in laptop compartment

THE TENZING RANGE

Alongside the 30L backpack tested here, Summit Creative also makes 40L and 50L versions, for £320 and £340 respectively. These will hold progressively more kit, including a 16in laptop, but it's worth noting that neither are carry-on compatible. All three bags are available in a choice of black, green, or orange.

Professor Newman on...

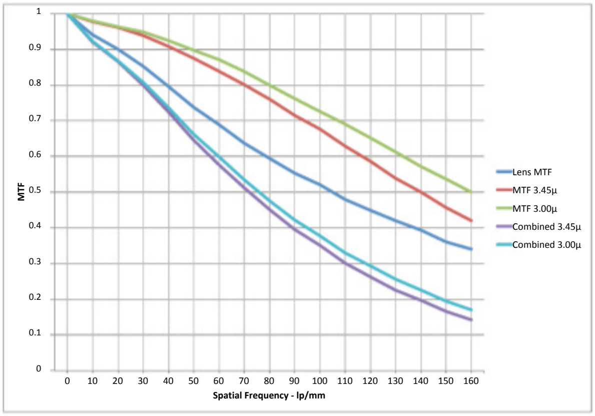
Pixel limit?

Professor Newman looks at an intriguing question about increases in pixel count

In this article I return to some of the questions posed by AP reader Richard Sharp. Richard asked at which point any further increase in sensor pixel count becomes pointless, as even though the eye may be able to resolve the detail, it is beyond the printer capability to reproduce the detail, or the viewing distance may be such that the extra detail cannot be resolved by the eye.

The answer depends on what you consider 'pointless', and that really depends on your own practice and how you view your images. Nevertheless, I do find it interesting that this question is generally applied to sensors and not to lenses. One could as easily ask when improvement in lenses becomes pointless, as that would essentially be asking the same question. Sensors with low pixel counts and unsharp lenses both add blur to the image, so the question becomes how much blur can be tolerated, which is entirely about one's personal standards and use.

To explain further, it has become common to measure blur by use of the modulation transfer function (MTF), which shows the contrast delivered over a range of spatial frequencies, usually described in terms of line-pairs per millimetre (lp/mm). I've prepared a graph showing MTF curves for a lens and two sensors. The source of the data is Zeiss' Dr Hubert Nasse for the lens and the metrology company Adimec for the sensors. The lens data is from a high-quality 50mm f/2 at its peak f-number of f/5.6. The sensor data is for 3.45µm and 3.00µm pixels, which correspond to 72MP and 96MP on full-frame. This example is as close to the realm of diminishing returns as one could wish.



In this MTF graph, the darker blue trace is the MTF of a 50mm f/2 lens. The MTFs of 3.45µm and 3.00µm image sensors are given by the red and green traces, respectively. The combined MTFs of the lens and sensor are given by the purple trace for the 3.45µm sensor, and the light blue trace for the 3.00µm sensor

The combined effect of different MTF contributions in a system can be found by multiplying together the MTFs at each spatial frequency. This is shown in the other two curves, illustrating the result for each of the two pixel sizes when used in combination with the Zeiss lens. It can be seen that the smaller pixels give a measurable sharpness advantage over the larger ones. In terms of the popular MTF50 metric (the resolution given at 50% contrast), the smaller pixels yield 76 lp/mm whilst the larger give 72. It's a small difference, but the advantage is measurable.

So, where is the limit at which increases in pixel count are not worthwhile? This is more a question for the manufacturer than the consumer, since while product marketing will take advantage of larger pixel counts, the drive to smaller pixels is mainly led by manufacturing concerns. These stem from the fact that the large sensors used by interchangeable-lens cameras are very much subsidiary products to smaller sensors which provide the bulk of a sensor manufacturer's business. As such, they piggyback on the production and design processes for the smaller sensors, and those favour smaller pixels. Thus the large sensor's pixel size will reduce to keep within the optimum range for the processes used. One example of this effect in action is the Sony A7S III, which is marketed as a 12MP camera but in reality has a 48MP sensor, with each of the marketing pixels being the outcome of binning four native pixels.

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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Nigel Atherton, *Editor*

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Amateur Photographer

Leica D-Lux 8

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Six macro photographers share their contrasting approaches

Focus stacking in Lightroom

How to maximise the depth of field in your macro shots

Photography's 200th birthday

Two centuries since Niépce made the first recorded image

Tested Panasonic FZ82D: superzoom bridge camera • SmallRig AD-50 Lite tripod

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LETTER OF THE WEEK

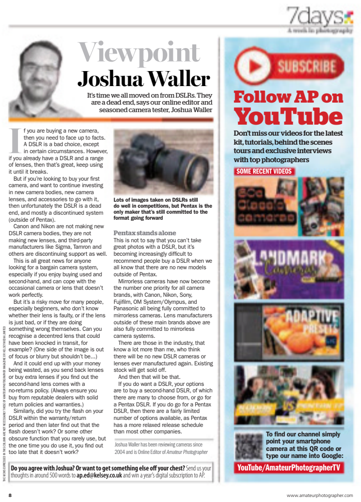
DSLR defence

According to Joshua Waller, DSLRs are dead. No doubt Mr Waller can afford to purchase a new camera every week. I have both DSLRs and mirrorless and would rather use a DSLR – you can see and focus the image without turning the camera on.

Everything made nowadays is destined for the tip the moment it plays up, including DSLRs. Is it not about time cameras should be repairable and manufacturers fined for having products that do not last more than 20 years? My film cameras from 50 years ago still function perfectly. I even have a half-plate camera over 140 years old, now working perfectly after being rebuilt.

I suggest readers join the Photographic Collectors Club of Great Britain and learn something – there is more to photography than the latest trillion-pixel model. Please note my views are my own and do not necessarily include the members of the PCCGB. **Christopher Lloyd**

Joshua said quite clearly in his *Viewpoint* that people should keep using DSLRs (and we humble scribes on AP definitely can't afford a camera every week!) His point is that camera firms aren't making new DSLRs any more. We're glad you're enjoying your older cameras, and you make some good points about the importance of recycling and environmentally friendly manufacturing. But many digital cameras can be repaired and serviced – see www.fixationuk.com – and if camera firms didn't keep bringing out new models as technology and the market evolve, they'd go to the wall.



7days
A week in photography

Viewpoint
Joshua Waller
It's time we all moved on from DSLRs. They are a dead end, says our online editor and seasoned camera tester, Joshua Waller

If you are buying a new camera, then you need to face up to facts. A DSLR is a bad choice, except in certain circumstances. However, if you already have a DSLR and a range of lenses, then that's great, keep using it until it breaks.

But if you're looking to buy your first camera, and want to continue investing in new camera bodies, new camera lenses, and accessories to go with it, then unfortunately the DSLR is a dead end, and mostly a discontinued system (outside of Pentax).

Canon and Nikon are not making new DSLR camera bodies, they are not making new lenses, and third-party manufacturers like Sigma, Tamron and others are discontinuing support as well.

This is all great news for anyone looking for a bargain camera system, especially if you enjoy buying used and second-hand, and can cope with the occasional camera or lens that doesn't work perfectly.

But it's a risky move for many people, especially beginners, who don't know whether their lens is faulty, or if the lens is just bad, or if they are doing something wrong themselves. Can you recognise a decentred lens that could have been knocked in transit, for example? (One side of the image is out of focus or blurry but shouldn't be…)

And it could end up with your money being wasted, as you send back lenses or buy extra lenses if you find out the second-hand lens comes with a no-returns policy. (Always ensure you buy from reputable dealers with solid return policies and warranties.)

Similarly, did you try the flash on your DSLR within the warranty/return period and then later find out that the flash doesn't work? Or some other obscure function that you rarely use, but the one time you do use it, you find out too late that it doesn't work?

Lots of images taken on DSLRs still do well in competitions, but Pentax is the only maker that's still committed to the format going forward

Pentax stands alone
This is not to say that you can't take great photos with a DSLR, but it's becoming increasingly difficult to recommend people buy a DSLR when we all know that there are no new models outside of Pentax.

Mirrorless cameras have now become the number one priority for all camera brands, with Canon, Nikon, Sony, Fujifilm, OM System/Olympus, and Panasonic all being fully committed to mirrorless cameras. Lens manufacturers outside of these main brands above are also fully committed to mirrorless camera systems.

There are those in the industry, that know a lot more than me, who think there will be no new DSLR cameras or lenses ever manufactured again. Existing stock will get sold off.

And then that will be that.

If you do want a DSLR, your options are to buy a second-hand DSLR, of which there are many to choose from, or go for a Pentax DSLR. If you do go for a Pentax DSLR, then there are a fairly limited number of options available, as Pentax has a more relaxed release schedule than most other companies.

Joshua Waller has been reviewing cameras since 2004 and is Online Editor of *Amateur Photographer*

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Chris took this on a Leica Q3

© CHRIS GEIGER

Leica likes

Just a quick note to say how much my dad Roger and I enjoyed the Leica edition (AP 11 March) – fantastic read! AP is always packed with great content, but this one was a real treat. I've attached this photograph (see left, bottom), which I captured with the Leica Q3 – I hope you like it.

Keep up the brilliant work! Looking forward to the next issue.
Chris Geiger

Wow, that's a really impressive capture! It's great to see you getting good use from your Leica Q3, which you can now pick up for around £4,000 from a reputable used dealer. Still not cheap, but you get a fab lens too!

Ringing the changes

Massive volume sales and the worldwide take-up of smartphones, often pushing out digital camera sales for a variety of reasons, means the photographic landscape has changed dramatically. AP's staunch and constantly leading support for those of us who still have 'real' cameras is beyond question. But is it time to give more focus to smartphone photography?

Amy Davies has already done a remarkable job on smartphone reviews and features without detracting or dominating what AP has always represented so well. Showing more picture results and knowing users' approaches would add more while keeping a good balance. The reality is that smartphone photography is not going away, it is a new chapter, and will continue to grow as more of the working technology changes, which gives AP added strength to reflect market trends going forward.

Time and again AP readers talk of adding a smartphone to their kit choices, and we all know the best camera is the one you have with you, whatever it is.
Matt Parker

THIS WEEK WE ASKED...

Spring is here! What are you looking forward to photographing?

You said...

Jeff Spitzer @JeffSpitzer2025
As much of nature in full bloom as I can!

Oddy Barber
Once it really starts to warm up I love doing macro of insects, butterflies and anything else I can find, but especially my favourite – jumping spiders.

David Vaux Nature Photography
I've already started with adders and seals this past week.

Steve Walker
Blossom, architecture, landscape, cityscape.

Mark Buckley
Maybe eventually a vibrant saturated cherry blossom shot.

Gill Prince
Anything that's brightly coloured!

Hugh Maxwell Photography
The landscape bursting into life once again!

Patrick Raymond Nowotny
Female screech owl for third year in a row.

Ian Douglas
Puffins on Skomer Island.

Joanna @Joeynoble
Lots more of our wonderful wildlife! Being out amongst nature is so good for the soul, I love it!

Susan Pilcher
The Milky Way!

Jane Coates
Bluebells and wildlife garlic. Puffins and gannets.

Ian Drury
Anything to get me out of the house.

Michelle Howell
Adders basking in sunshine!

Robin Trewinnard-Boyle
It's autumn down here in NZ, so funghi and wildlife.

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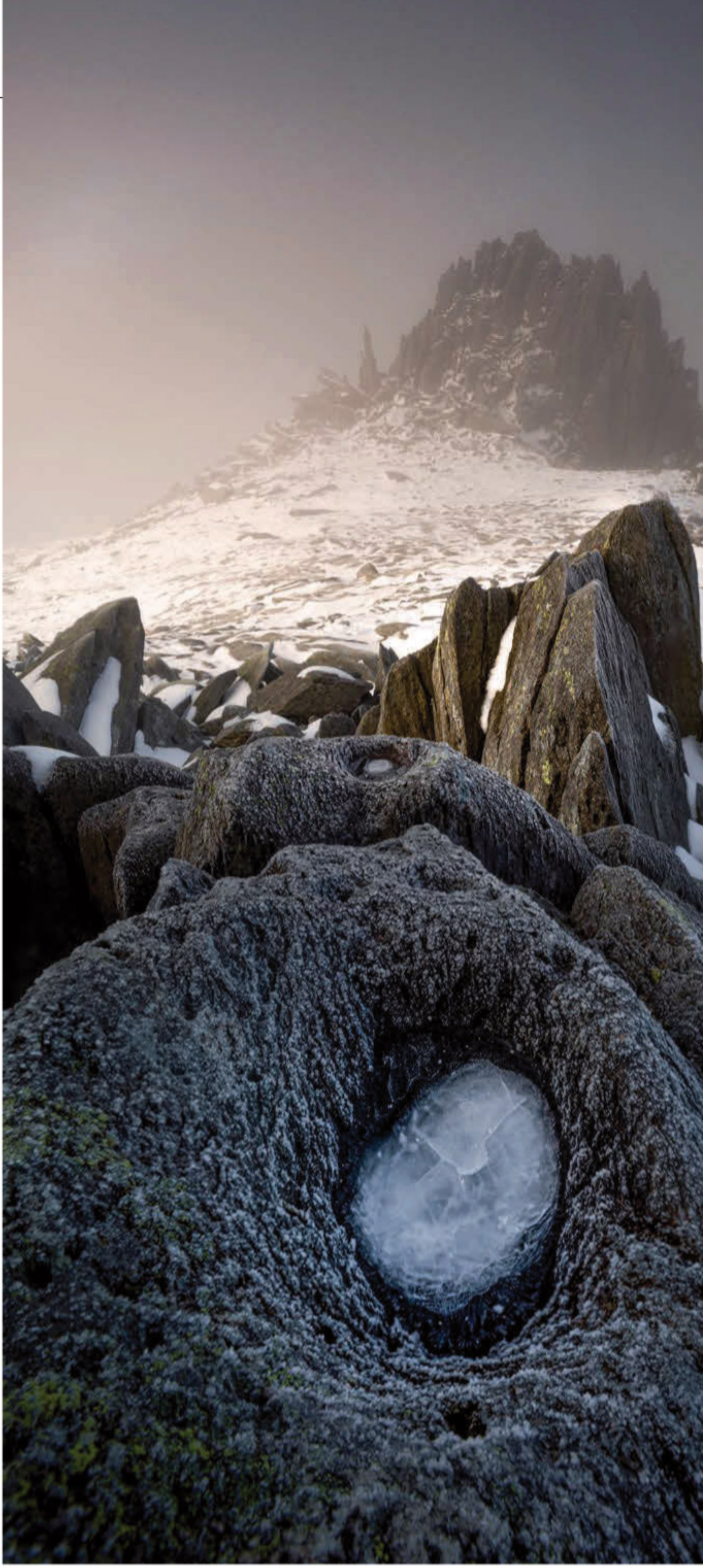
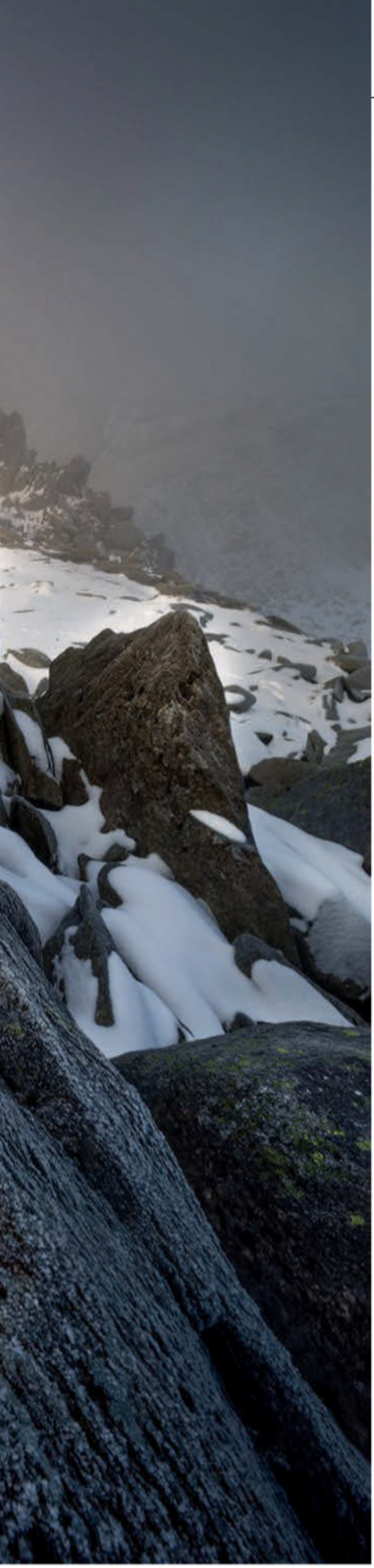
Dragon Eye
by Slawek Zabron

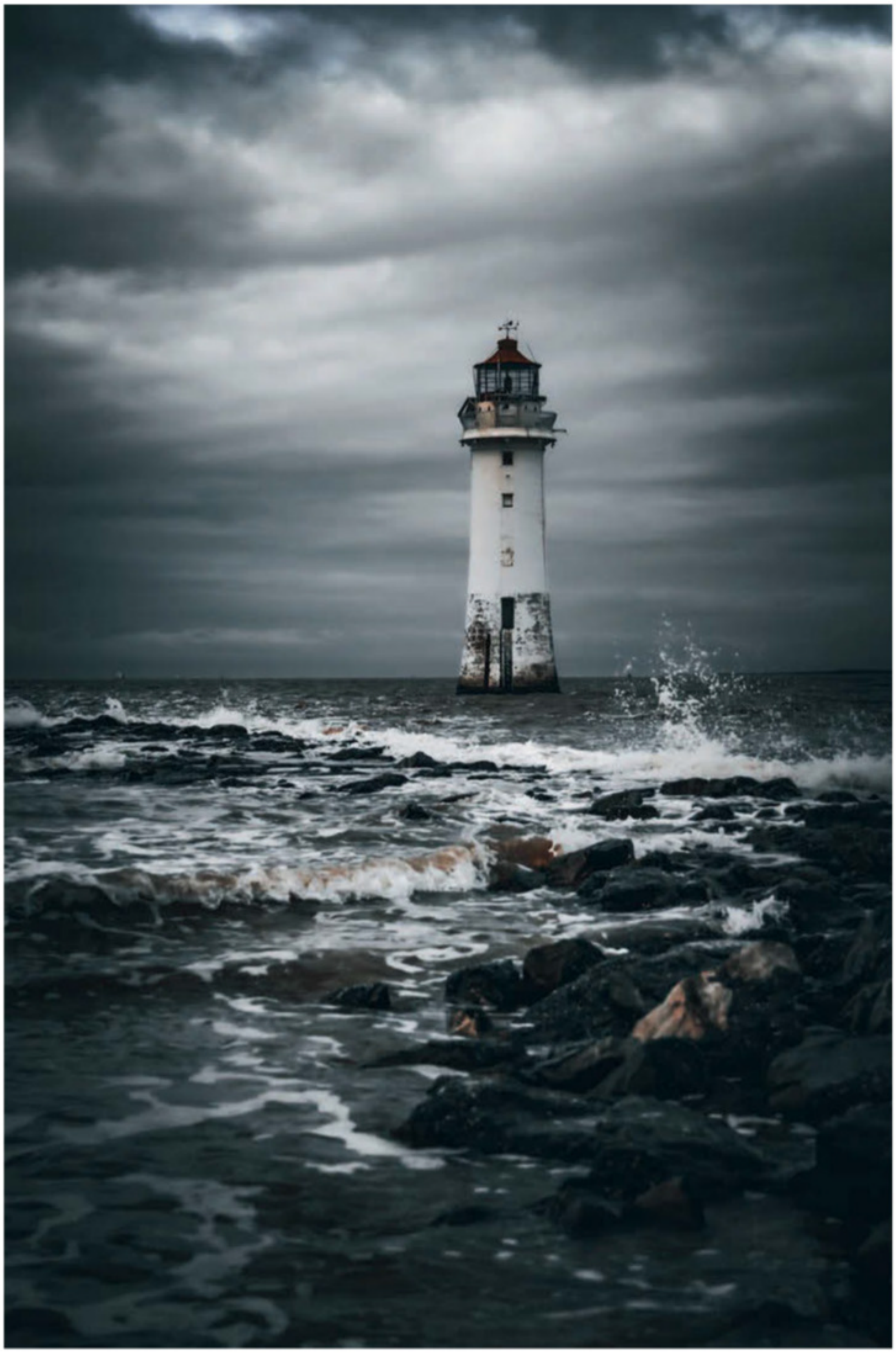
Canon EOS R5, 14-35mm, 1/13sec at f/16, ISO 100

'Taken in Snowdonia – Castell y Gwynt – this consists of four images, each with a different focus point, and merged in Photoshop to achieve sharpness from foreground to background. After a long search for an interesting shot that morning, I found an intriguing rock with a small amount of frozen water that looked like a dragon's eye. It was perfect for the foreground, adding character. The towering rocks behind resembled the back of a slumbering dragon, which enhanced the magical impression, as if you were in a Tolkien novel.'

Instagram: @Islands_in_my_lens







Guardian of the Storm
by Arul Kumar

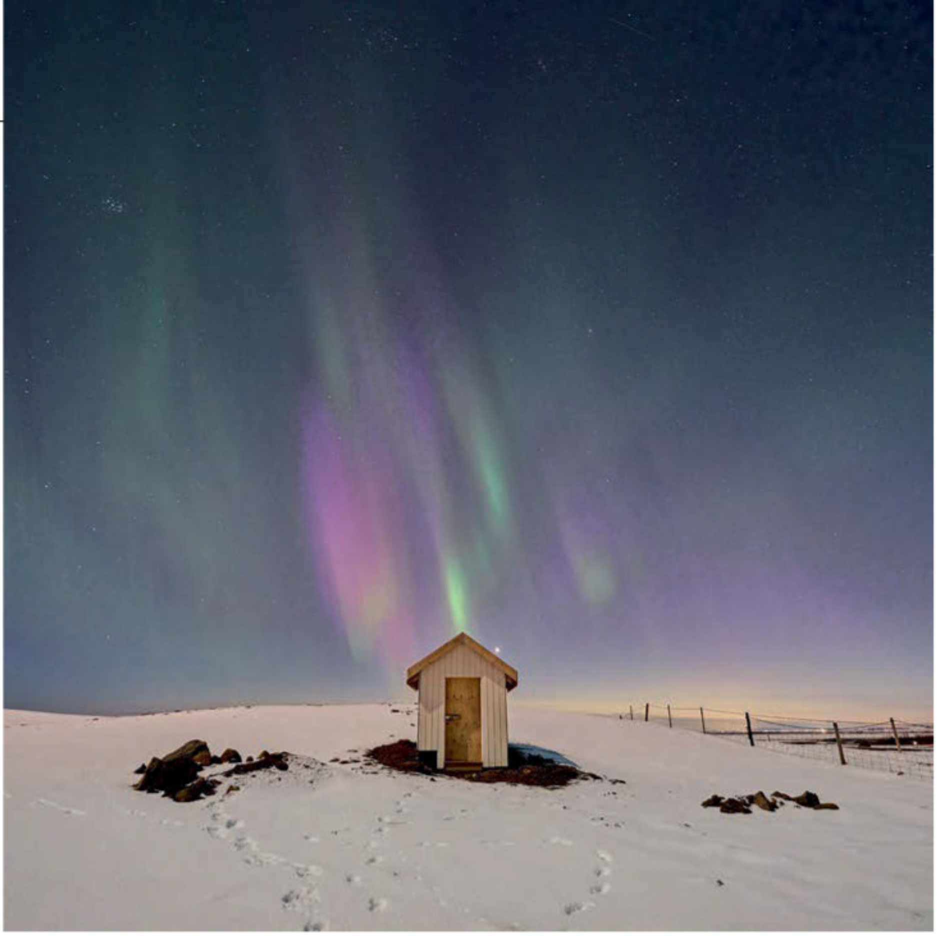
Canon EOS R10, RF-S18-150mm, 1/500sec at f/5.6, ISO 100

'The sea rages, the skies darken, and yet the lighthouse stands – unshaken, unwavering. A silent witness to tempests and tides, it does not fight the storm but endures it.

'Time and salt have weathered its walls, yet its purpose remains the same: to guide, to warn, to stand tall in the face of uncertainty.'

Instagram: @its_me_arulk

It's good to share

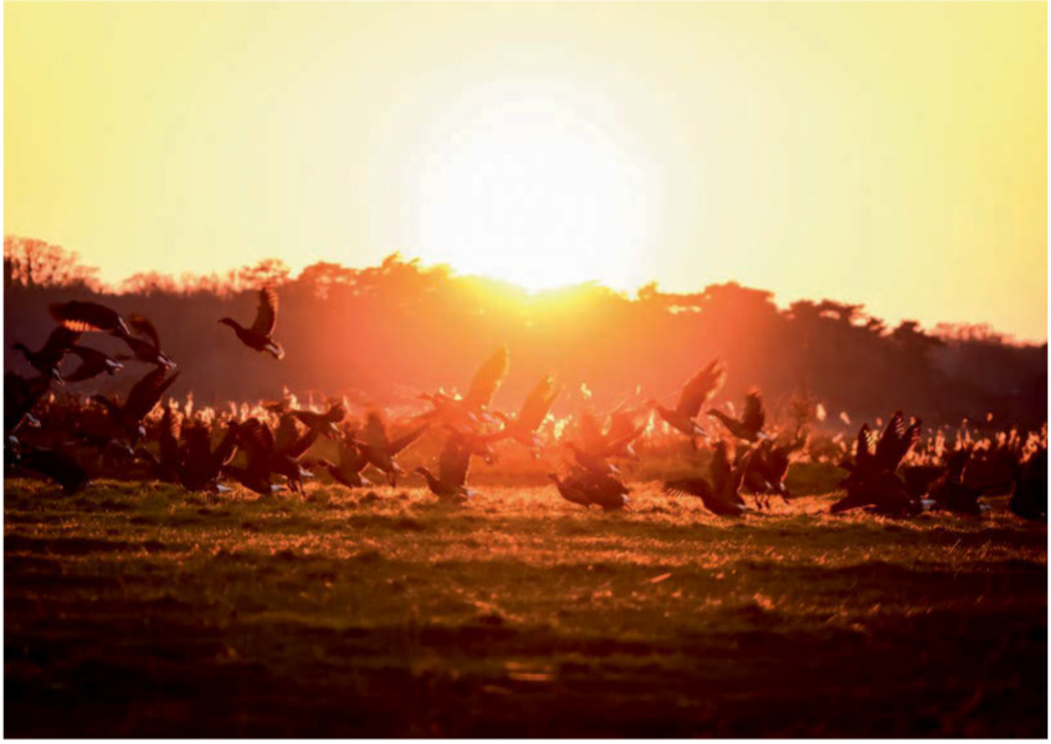


Aurora Over the Wee Hut in Iceland
by Julie Smith

Sony A1, Sony 14mm F1.8 GM, 4sec at f/1.8, ISO 500, 14mm

'The aurora was visible from twilight and got stronger by the minute. Soon it filled the sky to the north, south, east and west. This snowy shot was taken over a little hut in southern Iceland before it was properly dark. The purple and green danced perfectly above it.'
Instagram: @julieandmichaelsmith

We also liked...



Wildlife and Sunsets
by Adam Sharp

Nikon Z5 with Nikon Z 24-200mm, 1/250sec at f/7.1, ISO 500

'The geese at Wells-next-the-Sea are a captivating sight, often seen along the marshes and beaches. The migratory birds, particularly Brent geese, gather in large numbers during the winter months. Their elegant formations and gentle calls add to the serene beauty of this coastal Norfolk town.'
Instagram: @adam_sharp_photography

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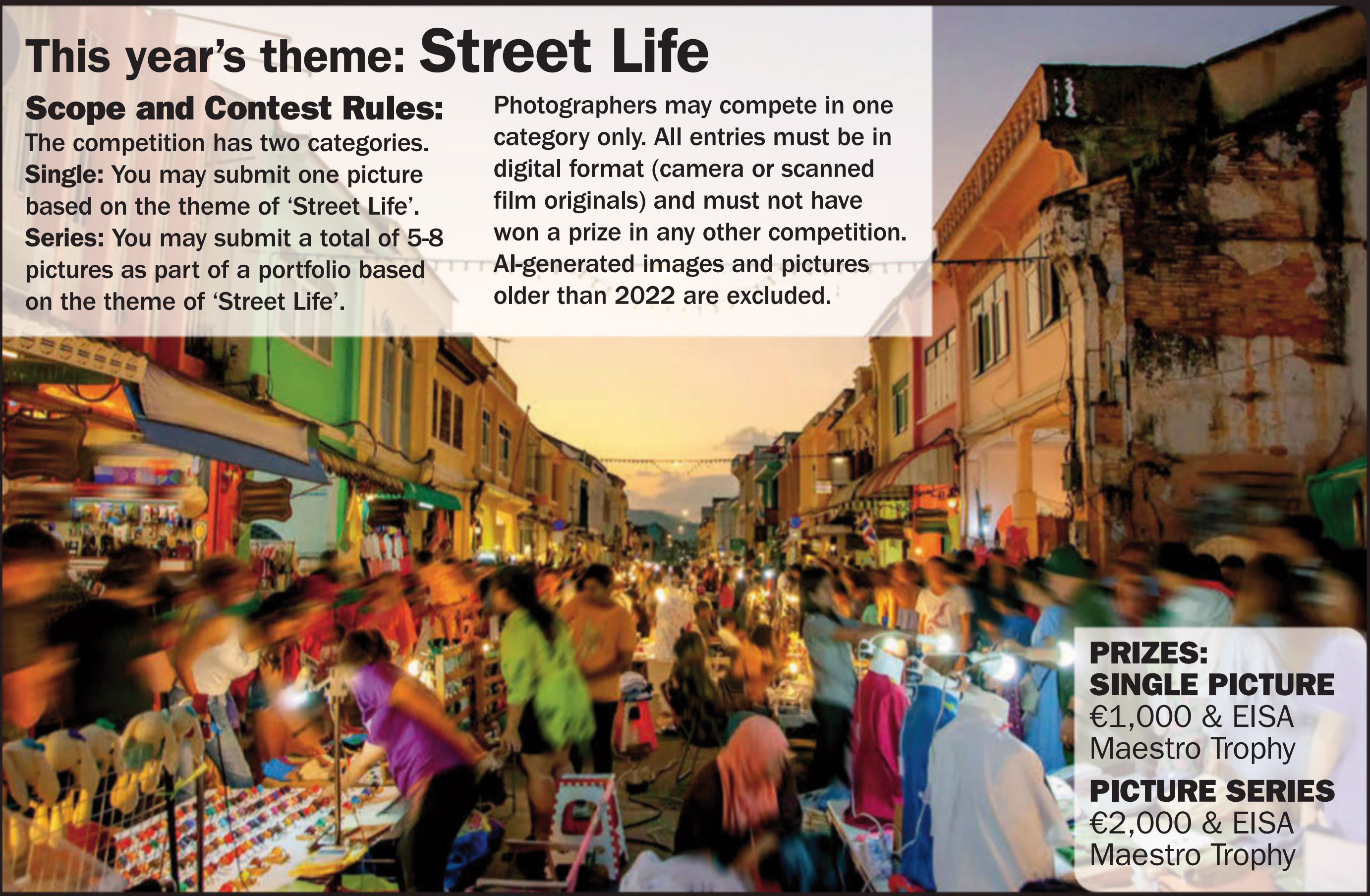
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This year's theme: Street Life

Scope and Contest Rules:

The competition has two categories.
Single: You may submit one picture based on the theme of 'Street Life'.
Series: You may submit a total of 5-8 pictures as part of a portfolio based on the theme of 'Street Life'.

Photographers may compete in one category only. All entries must be in digital format (camera or scanned film originals) and must not have won a prize in any other competition. AI-generated images and pictures older than 2022 are excluded.

PRIZES:

SINGLE PICTURE
€1,000 & EISA Maestro Trophy

PICTURE SERIES
€2,000 & EISA Maestro Trophy

NATIONAL DEADLINE: MAY 15TH 2025

Email your entry (single image OR series) to: ap.Maestro@kelsey.co.uk. Images must be JPEG and a minimum of 2,000 pixels on the longest side. AP will choose the winners and publish them in a July issue. The first-placed winners will receive a one-year digital subscription to AP and go forward to the International round.

National Maestro winners will also be published on Facebook at the end of June for the EISA Public's Choice competition. Prize for Single and Series winners: €500

EISA
EXPERT IMAGING AND SOUND ASSOCIATION
Maestro Photo Contest
2025
Street Life

INTERNATIONAL JUDGING: JUNE 2025

The winning entries from each of the 15 participating EISA countries will then be judged together at the Association's General Meeting in June 2025. The final results of the International Maestro contest will be celebrated at the EISA Awards Gala in September 2025 and revealed, online, alongside the EISA product Awards on 15 August 2025.

The winning international photographs will be published in the Sept or Oct issues of all 15 EISA photo magazines/ websites. Circumstances permitting, winners will be invited to the EISA Awards ceremony in Sept 2025

For further details, terms and conditions visit www.eisa.eu/maestro and www.amateurphotographer.com

1

2

3

1 Sitting Pretty by Carole Ashton

2 Working hard by Judith Harland

3 Will I Pass! by Terry Walker

4 Manarola Sunset by Tracy Burr

Join the Club

Now that evenings are lighter, this friendly club alternates indoor meetings and local trips

When was the club founded?
Skegness Camera Club was founded on 16 November 2009 at the Welcome Pub in Skegness. Our longest-serving member Terry Walker was at this inaugural meeting and has been at nearly every meeting since. At its peak, the club had 22 members. Unfortunately, numbers have dipped recently but we are committed to reversing this trend.

What does your club offer to new members?
We are a small club offering a friendly and interactive environment to new members. Our aim is to enable all members to achieve their best through the programme we offer – and to this end we have members with a range of abilities who are always happy to be on hand to offer their knowledge and support and we know there is no such thing as a silly question. We offer prospective members two free meetings, so they can come and experience what we have to offer.

Describe a typical club meeting
We meet in a room at Skegness Bowls Club. Our meetings start at 7pm.

On practical nights we set up at least two stations with the equipment needed for the session. This makes it possible for everyone who wants to do so to have some time at a station. Typical topics covered include water droplets, oil in water, macro, water splash, sparklers behind lightbulbs, and mount-cutting nights where members bring in their images which are being entered into competitions and get them mounted into the correct size.

Other meetings include demonstrations and help with technical topics such as Getting off Auto, editing images in Lightroom, the use of filters and how to use lighting equipment when taking portraits. These are usually delivered by our club chairman.

When the nights get lighter, we alternate indoor meetings with trips out locally. Last year we did light trails around the clock tower in Skegness, light painting and sunset photography at Gibraltar Point, and bike/car track nights at Cadwell Park.

Do you invite guest speakers?
Yes – as members of the Lincolnshire Photographic Association (LPA) we have access to speakers with a range of different subjects to choose from. This can include monochrome, light painting and street photography. We try to get different speakers each year depending on what our members are interested in. Unfortunately, because we are small club, funds do not allow us to book celebrity speakers.

Do members compete in regional or national competitions?
We enter competitions as part of the LPA, against other clubs in the Lincolnshire area. We also have internal club competitions in which we invite a local judge to score and give us constructive advice. The club competition scores go towards us having a Photograph of the Year and a Photographer of the Year, which are awarded at our Christmas Party night out.

Several members have entered their images in national competitions and been published in magazines.

How many members do you have?
Currently, we have about 10-12 members, so we are always on the lookout for new members to come and join us. We welcome complete beginners or more experienced photographers and we try to cater our meetings so that there is something for everyone.

Are any residential trips or outings planned?
This year we are hoping to venture further afield and travel to Lincoln to photograph the castle and the cathedral.

What are the club's goals for the future?
Our future goals are to try to grow the club and introduce more members to the joys of photography and cake! In addition, we would also like to try some different types of photography that we haven't tried before, such as ICM, as well as more portrait photography and still-life and street photography.

5 Boats at Gibraltar Point by Emma Woodward

9 In the Pink by Derek Snellgrove

6

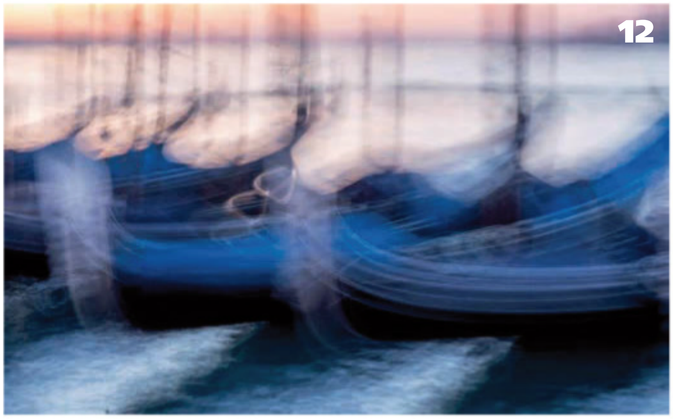
6 I'm Watching You! by Steve Harland

7

8

10

11


12

7 Full Flaps by Terry Walker

8 Up We Go by Derek Snellgrove

10 Pink Tulip by Emma Woodward

11 Clocking Off by Steve Harland

12 Gondola Abstract by Tracy Burr

13 In need of TLC by Carole Ashton

13

Club essentials

Skegness Camera Club

Skegness Indoor Bowls Club,
Wainfleet Rd, Skegness, PE25 2EL

Meets: Every other Tuesday at 7pm

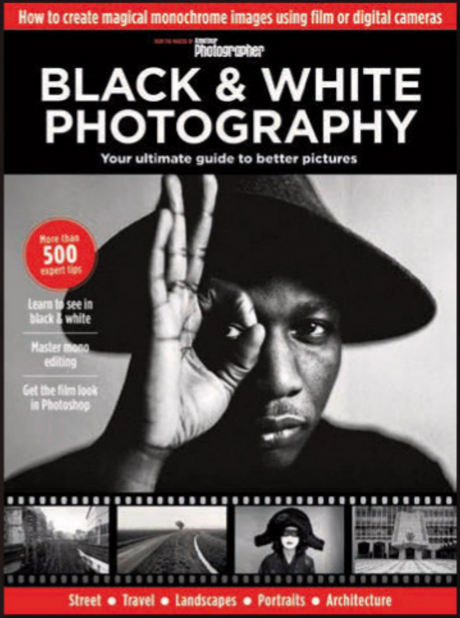
Membership: Annual membership is £12 to the Camera Club and £18 to Skegness Bowls Club, and then £3 per meeting

Contact: skegnesscameraclub@yahoo.co.uk

Website: skegnesscameraclub.co.uk

From the makers of Amateur Photographer magazine

Your definitive guides to assist you in all aspects of photography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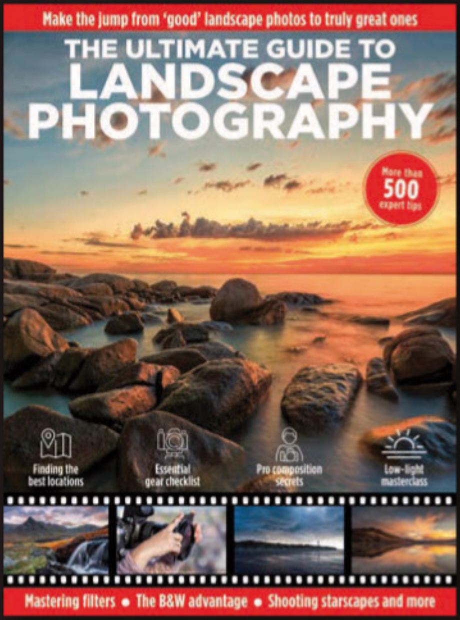
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A round-up of the AP testing team's favourite and most highly rated kit, including both cameras and all kinds of accessories, across a wide range of price points

OM System Tough TG-7

● £499 ● explore.omsystem.com

This latest model in a long line of class-leading rugged cameras is waterproof to 15m, shockproof against a 2.1m drop, crushproof and freezeproof. The 25-100mm equivalent lens is paired with a 12MP sensor, with in-body stabilisation to combat shake. Viewing is via a 3in LCD. The TG-7 is also one of the few cameras of its type that can record raw files.

★★★★☆ **Reviewed 2 Apr 2024**

Canon PowerShot G1 X Mark III

● £1,140 ● www.canon.co.uk

This unique zoom compact offers excellent image quality by employing the same 24.2MP APS-C sensor as several of Canon's DSLRs and mirrorless cameras, along with a 24-72mm equivalent lens. A central viewfinder, fully articulated touchscreen and comprehensive external controls round off a superb little camera for enthusiast photographers.

★★★★★

Reviewed 3 Feb 2018

Fujifilm X100VI

● £1,599 ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

The sixth version of Fujifilm's charismatic rangefinder-styled compact boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor in front of its fixed 23mm f/2 lens. It also gains in-body stabilisation while barely increasing in size. Traditional analogue control dials are joined by a unique hybrid optical/electronic viewfinder and a tilting touchscreen on the back. It's a truly fabulous camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed 9 Apr 2024

Ricoh GR III

● £949 ● ricohgr.eu/en-gb

A favourite of street photographers, the GR III combines a 24MP APS-C sensor and a sharp 28mm equivalent f/2.8 lens in a slim, pocketable body. It offers sensitivities up to ISO 102,400 and 4fps shooting, while in-body image stabilisation helps keeps image sharp. Viewing is via a fixed 3in rear LCD or an optional optical viewfinder that slots onto the hot shoe.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 3 Aug 2019

Sony RX100 VII

● £1,050 ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony has somehow crammed a 24-200mm equivalent zoom, pop-up electronic viewfinder, tilting screen, 20 fps shooting and 4K video recording into a body that you can slip into a jacket pocket. With the firm's latest AF technology also on board, it's without doubt the most accomplished pocket camera on the market.

★★★★½

Reviewed 5 Oct 2019

Sony RX10 IV

● £1,500 ● www.sony.co.uk

This sets a new standard for superzoom cameras, with a 24-600mm equivalent lens, 20MP 1in sensor, and 24 fps continuous shooting. Its SLR-shaped body hosts a large electronic viewfinder and a decent set of physical controls. It's the best all-in-one camera for wildlife or travel photography that you can buy right now.

★★★★★

Reviewed 2 Dec 2017

Canon EOS 250D

● £650 with 18-55mm IS lens ● www.canon.co.uk

One of the smallest DSLRs around, the EOS 250D strikes a great balance between portability and usability. It's equipped with a novice-friendly Guided Mode, while Canon's Dual Pixel CMOS sensor provides excellent autofocus in live view. Image quality is very good, delivering vibrant colours and plenty of fine detail.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 7 Sep 2019

Olympus OM-D E-M10 Mark IV

● £749 with 14-42mm ● explore.omsystem.com

With a charismatic retro design, fine handling, highly effective in-body stabilisation and attractive JPEG output, Olympus has made a camera that's more pleasant to use than its entry-level competitors. Its 20MP sensor delivers good results up to ISO 3200 at least, and its tilting screen can be set to face forwards beneath the camera.

★★★★½

Reviewed 26 Sep 2020

Fujifilm X-T5

● £1,699 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest X-T model is a great choice for serious enthusiast photographers. It boasts a 40MP APS-C sensor housed in a retro-styled body covered with traditional analogue control dials. Subject-detection autofocus, in-body stabilisation and Fujifilm's lovely colour modes round off an extremely desirable package.

★★★★★

Reviewed 3 Jan 2023

Canon EOS R50

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.canon.co.uk

With the EOS R50, Canon has fitted some impressive technology into a compact and lightweight body. It boasts highly capable subject recognition autofocus coupled with rapid continuous shooting. Image quality is very pleasing too, with attractive files direct from the camera. It also works well with EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★☆

Reviewed 6 Jun 2023

Fujifilm X-T30 II

● £899 with 15-45mm lens ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

This lovely little camera provides excellent performance, while preserving the charm and charisma of the X-series. It's a great all-rounder, and handles exceptionally well thanks to an intuitive interface based around traditional analogue dials. Image quality is superb in both raw and JPEG, aided by Fujifilm's peerless Film Simulation modes.

★★★★★

Reviewed 8 Feb 2022

Panasonic Lumix GH6

● £1,949 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

Panasonic's flagship Micro Four Thirds camera is aimed at videographers, but holds its own when capturing stills as well. Its 25MP sensor delivers plenty of detail, while enabling 5.7K recording at 60fps, or 4K at 120fps. Pro-spec video functionality and highly effective in-body stabilisation round off a fine package for content creators.

★★★★½

Reviewed 26 Apr 2022

Fujifilm X-S20

● £1,249 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Styled like a mini DSLR, the X-S20 uses electronic dials for changing exposure settings, as opposed to the X-T series' analogue controls. But you still get Fujifilm's signature fine image quality, along with in-body image stabilisation. It also boasts an array of advanced video features, making it a great choice for vloggers and photographers alike.

★★★★★

Reviewed 25 Jul 2023

Panasonic Lumix G9

● £1,000 body only ● www.panasonic.com/uk

The finest Micro Four Thirds stills camera Panasonic has ever produced, the G9 backs up its sturdy construction with a winning combination of high-speed shooting, fast focusing and effective in-body stabilisation. Boasting a control layout as complete as most pro-level DSLRs, it's an extremely versatile camera that's capable of dealing with any subject.

★★★★½

Reviewed 27 Jan 2018

OM System OM-1

● £1,999 body only ● explore.omsystem.com

It may be nostalgically named after a classic 35mm SLR, but there's nothing old-fashioned about this high-speed powerhouse. It's capable of shooting at 120fps with focus fixed, or 50fps with AF. AI subject detection recognises vehicles, animals and birds. It's also rugged, with IP53-rated weather-sealing, and includes class-leading stabilisation.

★★★★★

Reviewed 15 Mar 2022

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Nikon Z 6II

● £2,000 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This upgraded full-frame mirrorless all-rounder boasts a 24.5MP sensor, 273-point autofocus and rapid 14fps burst shooting. It also gains an SD card slot, alongside XQD/CFexpress. Its excellent viewfinder is complemented by a tilting screen, and both image quality and handling are superb.

★★★★½

Reviewed
9 Jan 2021

Sony Alpha 7 IV

● £2,399 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

Sony's latest enthusiast-focused full-frame mirrorless model sets a new standard in its class. Its 33MP full-frame sensor delivers excellent image quality, and it can shoot at up to 10fps. Its practically foolproof subject-detection AF can now recognise birds as well as humans and animals. A large, clear viewfinder and fully articulated touchscreen round off the package.

★★★★★

Reviewed
11 Dec 2021

Nikon D780

● £2,299 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

This highly accomplished 24MP full-frame model shows that there's life in the DSLR yet. It's superbly built with extensive weather sealing, handles brilliantly, and gives excellent results in any conditions. It'll provide top-level service to photographers who want to keep using their F-mount lenses and still prefer an optical viewfinder.

★★★★★

Reviewed
4 Apr 2020

Nikon Z 7II

● £2,999 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Nikon has delivered a sensible update to its flagship high-res model, with an additional SD card slot and slightly faster shooting. As before, its 45.7MP sensor gives stunning image quality, backed up by 5-axis in-body image stabilisation and fast, accurate autofocus. The viewfinder is superb, and F-mount SLR lenses can be used via the FTZ adapter.

★★★★½

Reviewed
6 Feb 2021

Nikon Z 9

● £5,299 body only ● www.nikon.co.uk

Without doubt Nikon's finest camera yet, the Z 9 combines high resolution, breathtaking speed, subject-recognition autofocus and pro-level build. It's capable of shooting 45.7MP raw files at 20fps for 1,000 frames, and 11MP JPEGs at 120fps. It can also record 8K video. With its superb viewfinder and tilting rear screen, it's probably the most capable camera around.

★★★★★

Reviewed
22 Mar 2022

Canon EOS R6 Mark II

● £2,779 body only ● www.canon.co.uk

Based around a 24MP full-frame sensor, this brilliant all-rounder will do almost anything you might ask it to. It combines reliable subject-detection AF, rapid continuous shooting, and effective image stabilisation in a body that handles well and gives great results. It also works well with adapted EF-mount DSLR lenses.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Mar 2023

Sony Alpha 7R V

● £3,999 body only ● www.sony.co.uk

With its 61MP full-frame sensor, the A7R V provides class-leading image quality while adding a whole array of improvements over its predecessor. These include subject-detection AF, a larger, more detailed viewfinder, and a more flexible rear LCD design. For those whose needs are more about image quality than speed, it's probably the best full-frame camera you can buy.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 Jan 2023

Leica M11 Monochrom

● £8,300 body only ● uk.leica-camera.com

Within its own specialist niche, this monochrome-only manual-focus rangefinder is almost perfect. Its build quality is stunning, and the pared-back design allows you to immerse yourself completely in the process of taking pictures. Most importantly, the 60.1MP sensor produces fantastic results, reaching a new pinnacle in black & white image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
16 May 2023

Fujifilm GFX100 II

● £6,999 body only ● www.fujifilm.eu/uk

Fujifilm's latest super-high resolution medium-format camera places an updated 102MP sensor in a pro-spec modular body. Subject-detection autofocus is on board for animals, birds and vehicles, while in-body image stabilisation helps keep handheld shots sharp. It's the ideal camera for serious photographers who demand the ultimate in image quality.

★★★★★

Reviewed
21 Nov 2023

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Tenba DNA 9 Slim Messenger

● £110 ● uk.tenba.com

If you'd like a small shoulder bag to carry a camera and a couple of lenses, this is among the best you'll find. Measuring 28cm wide by 20cm tall, it's well suited to holding a mirrorless camera or a compact DSLR. The quality of materials and construction is excellent, and there are plenty of handy pockets for organising accessories.

★★★★★ **Reviewed 26 Apr 2022**

Vanguard Veo Select 46BR

● £120 ● www.vanguardworld.co.uk

This backpack is capable of swallowing a substantial amount of kit while retaining a travel-friendly 28cm slim profile. An array of access points allow you to get at your kit from the back, top or either side. It's capable of holding a full-frame DSLR with 4-6 lenses along with a 13in laptop.

★★★★★

Reviewed
6 Jul 2019

Wandrd Prvke 31

● £279 (photography bundle) ● eu.wandrd.com

This spacious backpack offers an excellent combination of uncluttered style, rugged construction and a selection of genuinely useful pockets. The roll-close top section is the icing on the cake that always seems to allow just one more item to be squeezed in. Crucially, it's comfortable to carry over long distances.

★★★★★ **Reviewed**
11 Sep 2021

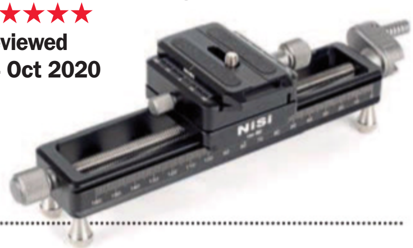
NiSi NM-180 Macro Rail

● £105 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

Arguably the best macro focusing rail available right now, the NM-180 combines excellent quality build with super-smooth operation. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame SLR while offering up to 130mm of travel, with a fold-out handle providing fine adjustment. It also boasts extensive compatibility with the Arca Swiss quick release system, with a dovetail profile along its base and a rotating clamp on top.

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Oct 2020



Cullmann Rondo 460M RB8.5

● £75 ● www.transcontinenta.co.uk/cullmann

If you want a fully featured tripod kit on a budget, this is a great choice. Four-section aluminium legs provide a max height of 160cm, while packing down to 43.5cm. It's rated to support a 4kg load, weighs 1.46kg, and one leg can be combined with the centre column to form a monopod.

★★★★½

Reviewed
21 Mar 2020

MeFOTO RoadTrip PRO

● £225 ● uk.benroeu.com

Few tripods come close to matching this one for sheer versatility. It extends to 152.5cm, folds down to 38.5cm and weighs 1.37kg. One leg can be detached for use as a monopod or boom arm, and there's even a small desktop stand stowed inside the centre column. It's sturdy enough to support a full-frame mirrorless set-up.

★★★★★

Reviewed 12 April 2022

Benro Rhino 24C tripod with VX25 head

● £250 ● uk.benroeu.com

Benro has got pretty much everything right with this sturdy, well-designed tripod and head that'll support a substantial load. This four-section carbon fibre model offers a maximum height of almost 1.7m, while folding down to 49cm and weighing 1.74kg. It's easily capable of supporting a full-frame DSLR with a telephoto zoom. Quite simply, it's a fantastic kit for the money.

★★★★★ **Reviewed**
28 Nov 2020

NiSi True Color ND-Vario 1-5 stops

● £89-£189 ● www.nisioptics.co.uk

This high-quality variable neutral density filter is ideal for regulating the amount of light entering your lens, without introducing any colour cast. It's optically excellent, boasts an oil and water-repellent coating, and includes a handy and accurate density scale. It's available in sizes from 40.5mm to 95mm.

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 May 2022

Benro SupaDupa Pro MSDPL46C

● £190 ● uk.benroeu.com

It may have a ridiculous name, but this five-section carbon fibre model might just be the best monopod we've ever tested. One clip leg lock provides easy length adjustment, while the lower twist locks are waterproof. On the top there's a clever bowl head with an Arca-compatible clamp. It's a great choice for those who regularly shoot with large telephotos.

★★★★★

Reviewed 24 April 2021

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Nissin i40

● £159 ● www.kenro.co.uk

A compact flashgun that's designed for mirrorless cameras, the i40 stands out for its high specification, compact size and ease of use. Its auto-zoom head covers lenses from 24-105mm equivalent. With a powerful output that belies its size, and a built-in LED video light, it's available for most brands of camera.

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 May 2014

RØDE Wireless Go II

● £309 ● en.rode.com

RØDE's compact wireless system makes it easier than ever to get high-quality audio for video recording. This dual-channel wireless mic kit includes two transmitter units and a receiver (a single-transmitter set is also available for £200). Key features include built-in rechargeable batteries lasting up to 7 hours, onboard backup recording, and up to 200m range.

RØDE
WIRELESS GO II
RØDE
RØDE
WIRELESS GO II

★★★★★

Reviewed
15 May 2021

Hahnel ProCube2

● £80 ● www.hahnel.ie

This dual battery charger boasts a sturdy metal shell and interchangeable plates that each accept a pair of batteries. An LCD display shows progress, and a 2.4A USB output allows phones or tablets to be charged once the camera batteries are full. Versions are available for all the main camera brands.

hähnel
pro
CUBE2
1365
56% 80%

★★★★★

Reviewed
24 Feb 2018

Datacolor SpyderX Pro

● £159 ● www.datacolor.com

If you like to post-process your images, you need to be sure that your monitor is showing colours accurately. Datacolor has designed the SpyderX to calibrate your display faster than ever before, with the process taking about two minutes. For most photographers the Pro package makes most sense.

about
most
datacolor
SpyderX

★★★★★

Reviewed 6 Apr 2019

Rotolight NEO 3

● £549 (Ultimate Kit) ● www.rotolight.com

LED lighting technology has advanced in leaps and bounds over recent years. Rotolight's compact on-camera NEO 3 offers a unique feature set thanks to its full colour RGBWW LEDs, with the ability to provide either continuous light or flash in 16.7 million colours. This firm has also programmed in the characteristics of 2,500 colour filters. Power is provided by an NP-F type Li-ion battery.

★★★★½

Reviewed
5 April 2022

Hoya Ultra-Pro Circular Polariser

● £47-£179 ● www.holdan.co.uk

Hoya's premium range of circular polarisers is available in 13 sizes from 37mm to 82mm. These filters feature 16 layers of anti-reflective coatings, high transmission, and are designed to repel water and oil while being scratch and stain resistant. An ultra-thin aluminium frame prevents vignetting when used with wideangle lenses.

HOYA
ULTRA-PRO
FILTER
CIR-PL
Water, Stain & Scratch Resistant

★★★★★

Reviewed
3 Mar 2018

Kase Wolverine K9 100mm Entry-Level Kit

● £385 ● www.kasefilters.com

With this top-quality filter system, Kase has carefully rethought every component. The slimline, low-profile holder benefits from extensive light-sealing, while the 82mm polariser clips into place magnetically; it's also easy to adjust from behind the camera. All of the filters use top-quality glass, and everything fits together into a single case. The result is a top-quality set-up that's easy to use and delivers superb results.

★★★★★

Reviewed
5 Dec 2020

Intrepid Compact Enlarger

● £280 ● www.intrepidcamera.co.uk

For film photography enthusiasts wishing to make prints at home, this compact and affordable unit includes lots of handy features. Based around full-colour LED technology, it supports both mono and colour printing. It's perfect for those who don't have space for a permanent darkroom.

★★★★★

Reviewed
17 July 2021

Fujifilm Instax Link WIDE

● £140 ● www.instax.co.uk

This brilliant portable printer produces great-looking 6x10cm prints on Fujifilm's Instax Wide film. It connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth and is controlled using an attractively designed and intuitive app. Powered by a built-in rechargeable battery and available in white or grey, it'll slip easily into a bag.

★★★★★

Reviewed
25 Jan 2022

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★★★★★

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★★★★★

"Quick delivery and great products!"
★★★★★

"Really helpful staff and a fantastic selection of kit. Definitely going back. Still smiling."
★★★★★

"Great customer service, and would recommend to anyone, thank you guys"
★★★★★

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★★★★★

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5Ds body
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R7 body..........£999 RP body	£499
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RF 15-35 F2.8 L IS USM box	£1399
RF 24 F1.8 STM macro box	£499
RF 24-70 F2.8 IS USM box	£1799
RF 24-105 F4 L IS	£999
RF 24-105 F4/7.3 IS STM	£329
RF 35 F1.8 IS macro	£399
RF 50 F1.2 L USM box	£1499
RF 70-200 F2.8 L IS USM box	£2199
RF 85 F2 macro box	£499
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RF 100-500 F4.5/7.1 L IS USM	£2299
RF 600 F11....£499 RF 800 F11	£599
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5D MKIII body box	£599
80D body box	£549
BG-E21/20/16/14/13/11/9/8 each	£99

CANON M MIRRORLESS USED

M50 MKII + 15-45 box	£499
M50 + 15-45 box	£399
EF-M 11-22 F4/5.6 IS STM	£249
EF-M 15-45 F3.5/6.3 IS STM	£79
EF-M 18-150 F3.5/6.3 IS STM	£349
EF-M 32 F1.4 STM box	£399
EF-M 55-200 F4.5/6.3 IS STM	£249
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CANON AF LENSES USED

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16-35 F4 USM IS L box	£499
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17-40 F4 L USM	£249
17-55 F2.8 IS USM box EFS	£399
18-135 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS nano	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 IS EFS	£299
24-70 F2.8 USM LII box	£999
24-70 F4 IS USM L	£599
24-105 F4 IS USM L	£499
28-300 F3.5/5.6 L IS USM box	£699
35 F1.4 USM LII box	£999
50 F1.2 L USM box	£799
50 F1.4 USM box	£249
60 F2.8 macro EFS	£349
65 F2.8 MP-E macro box	£799
70-200 F2.8 IS USM LIII box	£1299
70-200 F2.8 IS USM LII	£899
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM L	£699
70-300 F4/5.6 IS USM II Nano	£499
85 F1.2 U L..£799 85 F1.8 U	£299
85 F1.4 L IS USM box	£899
100 F2.8 IS USM L macro	£699
100 F2.8 USM macro box	£299
100-400 F4.5/5.6 LII box	£999/1399
100-400 f4.5/5.6 IS USM l Box	£699
180 F3.5 L USM macro	£699
200-400 F4 IS USM	£4999
300 F2.8 IS USM LII	£2999
300 F4 IS USM L box	£599
400 F4 DO IS II USM	£3799
400 F5.6 USM L	£599
500 F4 IS USM LII	£4499
1.4x or 2x extender MKIII each	£299

SIGMA CAF USED

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24 F1.4 Art	£399
24-70 F2.8 Art OS HSM	£899
24-105 F4 DG OS box	£399
35 F1.4 Art........£399 50 F1.4 Art	£399
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100-400 F5/6.3 OS HSM	£599
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£329
150 F2.8 EX DG OS	£399
150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS contem.	£699
TC1401 1.4x extender	£149

OTHER CAF USED

TAMRON 10-24 F3.5/4.5 DiII	£179
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TAMRON 18-270 F3.5/6.3 VC	£199
TAMRON 70-300 F4/5.6 VC USD	£249
TAMRON 70-300 F4/5.6 Di	£99
TAMRON 90 F2.8 Di	£199
TOKINA 12-24 F4 DX MKII	£199
TOKINA 12-28 F4 DX box	£269

FLASH/ACCESSORIES USED

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D7200 body	£599
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MBD-15 (D7100/7200)	£99
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16-80 F2.8/4 VR DX	£499
16-85 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR	£199
18-35 F3.5/4.5 AFS	£399
18-105 F3.5/5.6 VR DX AFS	£149
18-140 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR	£199
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX MKII	£299
18-200 F3.5/5.6 VR DX	£149
20 F1.8 AFS box	£599
24 F1.4 G AFS Mint box	£799
24 F2.8 AFD box	£249
24 F3.5 PC-E box	£799
24-70 F2.8 AFS VR box	£1299
24-70 F2.8 AFS box	£499
24-120 F4 AFS VR	£499
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50 F1.8 AFS box	£99
50 F1.8 AFD	£99
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55-200 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR DX box	£149
70-200 F2.8 E FL AFS box	£899/1399
70-300 F4.5/5.6 E AF P VR	£499
70-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR box	£249
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105 F2.8 AFS VR macro	£399
135 F2 DC box	£599
180-400 F4 E FL VR	£6999
200 F4 D mac box	£799
200-500 F5.6 E ED AFS VR	£799
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24-105 F4 DG OS	£499
35 F1.4 Art	£399
50 F1.4 Art	£399
70-200 F2.8 EX DG OS HSM	£399
105 F2.8 EX DG HSM OS	£329
150 F2.8 EX DG OS HSM box	£399
150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS sport	£999
150-600 F5/6.3 DG OS contem.	£699
180 F2.8 OS macro	£599
TC-1401 1.4x extender	£149

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55 F2.8 AIS micro	£199
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100-300 F5.6 AIS	£199
105 F1.8 AIS	£499
135 F2 AIS	£399
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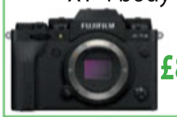

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40-150 F2.8 Pro box	£799
40-150 F4 Pro box	£649
60 F2.8 macro box	£379
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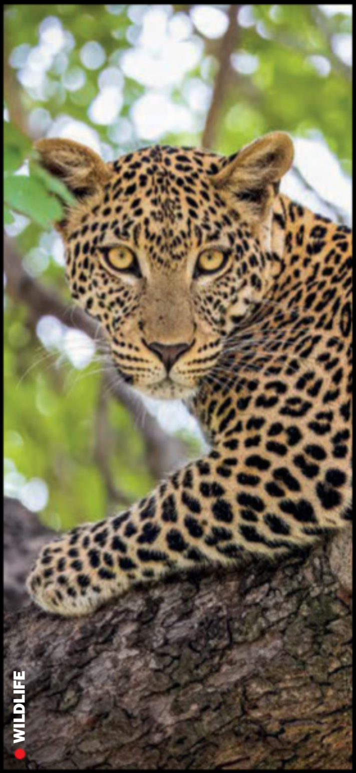

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Final Analysis

Peter Dench considers...

LAST STOP SPORTS BAR, from the book, Benidorm by Rob Ball

Benidorm is less a Spanish resort, more a sovereign outpost of the Full English Empire. A place where time zones are ignored but happy hours aren't, and the local language is a form of English spoken loudly and slowly, punctuated by 'GRACIAS, MATE.'

The Mini-Miami skyline is built for bargain-hunting Brits, a forest of high-rise hotels with more balconies than taste. Down below, golden pensioners and tattooed 20-somethings sprawl side by side, frying like human croquetas on Playa de Levante, slurping supermarket sangria.

Evenings are a wet dream of neon, karaoke, and the unmistakable scent of factor-15 mixed with regret. Sticky floors of faux-Irish pubs play host to heroic stag dos and blokes called Dave who've retired to escape the British weather but not its beer selection. There's paella, sometimes with chips and the historic Old Town, where you can find actual Spanish people if you look hard enough.

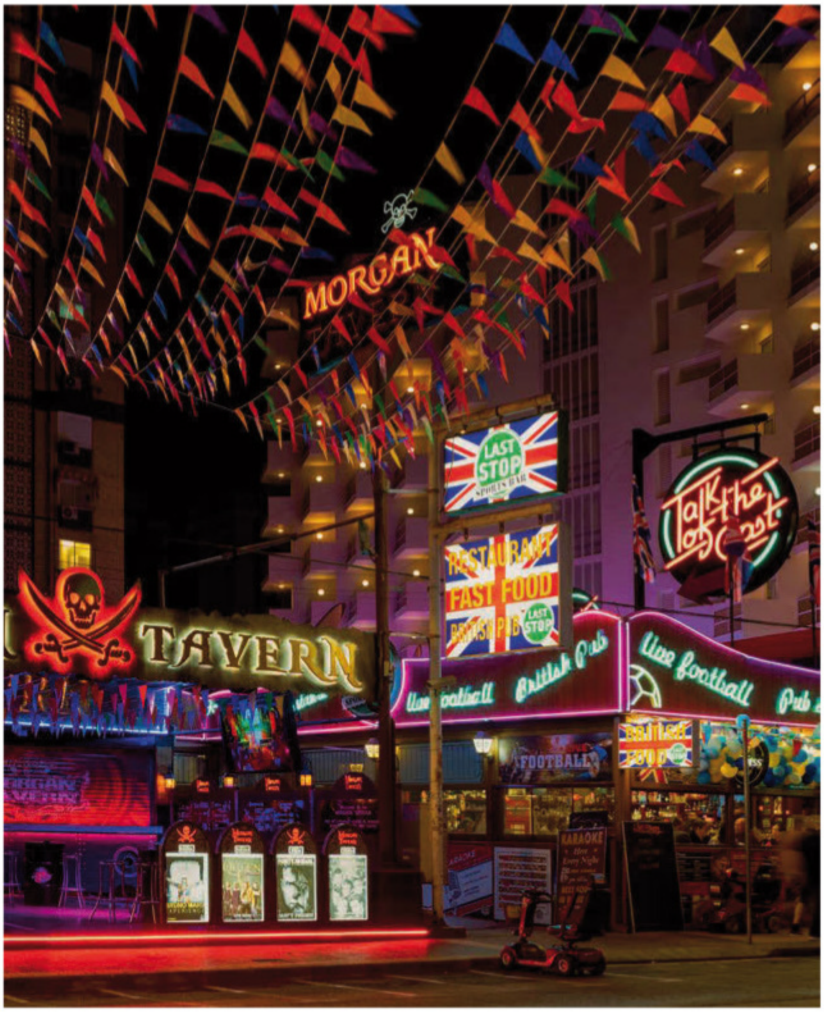
But let's be honest, Benidorm isn't about cultural immersion; it's about all-day breakfasts, inflatable flamingos and a weeklong embrace of life's guilty pleasures. Love it or loathe it, Benidorm doesn't care. It will always be there, pint in hand, waiting for the next planeload of sunseekers who 'only popped over for a few days' and never left.

That's my opinion of Benidorm anyway, you'll probably have your own from first-hand experience or cultural outlets. ITV comedy drama *Benidorm* ran for ten seasons. *Benidorm Live*, a stage adaptation, ran for 250 shows in theatres across the UK and Ireland.

Martin Parr inevitably shot the s**t out of Benidorm in the late 1990s with his macro lens and ring flash combo. He recalls, 'I loved it. I think the impact it made on me when I first went was partially because I'd never seen such a busy, crazy resort. It was bigger, trashier, with more interesting people.'

Juxtaposition

In his book *Benidorm*, using Fujifilm GF100s and occasionally Pentax 67 lenses, Rob Ball catches the juxtaposition between vibrant beach culture and its towering urban landscape, reflecting on how the promise of the perfect package holiday has evolved since its inception in the 1950s. It's a bold photographer who decides to photograph Benidorm. Rob Ball was well prepared, having photographed in over 100 resorts worldwide.



© ROB BALL

This vivid image promises much of what you expect from a bar in Britain's sunburnt second home – an England football match, British food, KARAOKE TILL LATE, the ubiquitous Union flag. The mobility scooters imbue the frame with a waft of humour. There's oodles of texture and the neon is a visual ode to Benidorm nightlife. It's a complex image of a place of pilgrimage and communion. Refreshing not to see the clichéd puking, scrapping, boob-flashing Brit draped in the flag of St George. It could have delivered the bad of Benidorm but in a way, conjures the beautiful.

Benidorm by Rob Ball (Hoxton Mini Press 2025) , 128pp, cloth spine and back cover, 237mm x 285mm.
ISBN: 978-1-914314-88-9

Peter Dench is a photographer, writer, curator and presenter based in London. He is one of the co-curators of Photo North and has been exhibited dozens of times. He has published a number of books including *The Dench Dozen: Great Britons of Photography Vol 1; Dench Does Dallas; The British Abroad; A&E: Alcohol & England* and *England Uncensored*. Visit **peterdench.com**

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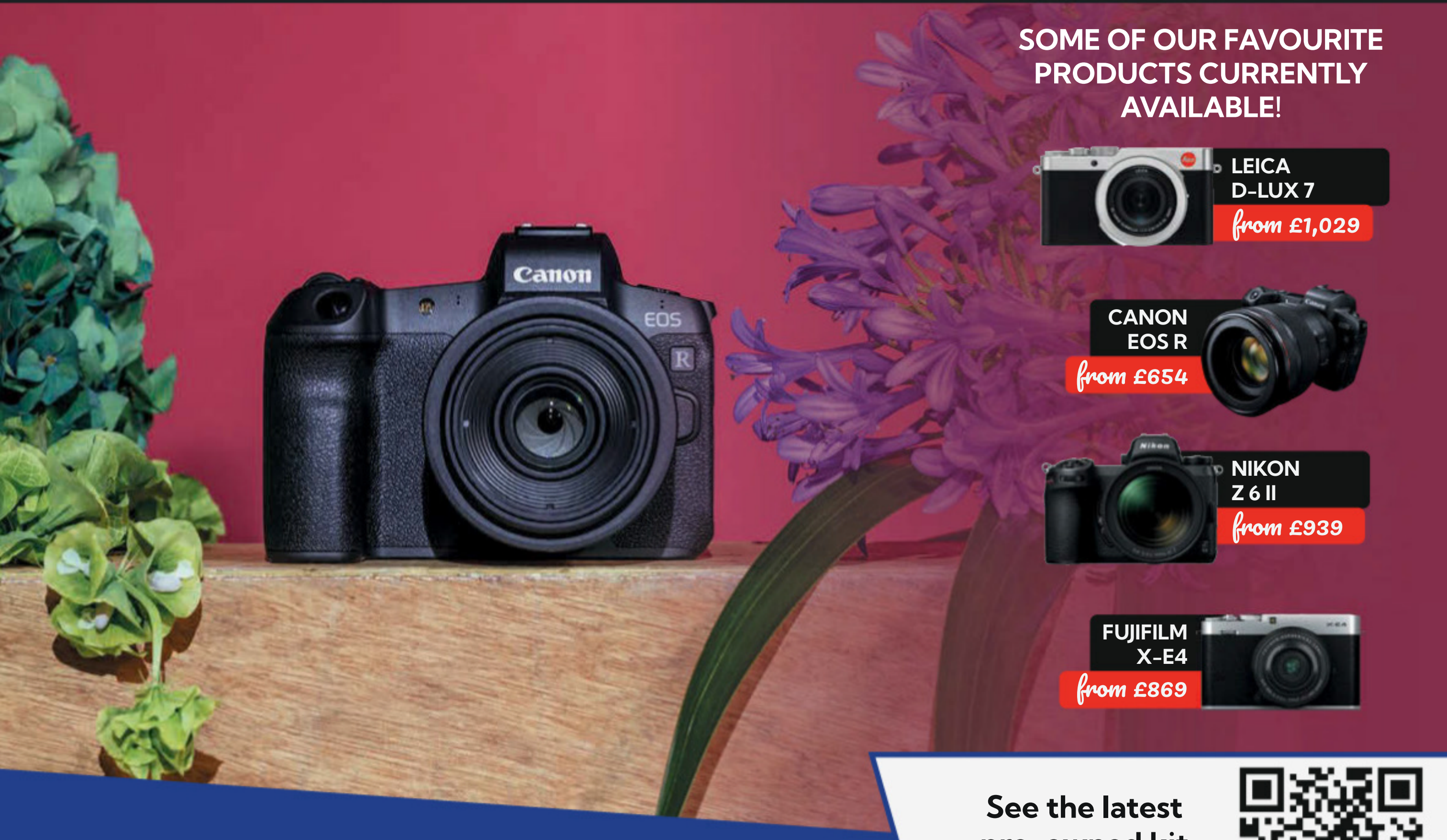

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